"Where there is no vision the people perish"

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The Poetry Review

TENNYSON AFTER 50 YEARS

Sir A. Quiller Couch *Hugh I'Anson Fausset*

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CONTENTS

No. 5

	PAGE
Tennyson. After 50 Years, Sir A. Quiller Couch	269
The Hidden Tennyson, Hugh I'Anson Fausset	272
An Afternoon with the Brontës, R. McKie	275
My Recollections of Tennyson, Margaret L. Woods	276
To the Dark Lady of a Sonnet, Campbell Fletcher	277
Poets of the Two World Wars, C.T.	278
The Patriot, Celia E. Bangham	284
Ezra Pound, Lady Mairi Stewart	285
March Coppice, E. W. Edmonds; *The Unknown Country,* D. Trail	289
Winter Trees, Cyril Hughes; *Spring, 1942,* C. Humphreys	290
Whither, Frances A. Heneage Burkitt	291
Broadcast of a First Performance, Sarah Stafford	296
Man Alive! F. T. Bratton	296
Lament for a Dictator, J. Peirse; *Repentance,* R. Akhurst	297
The Old Woman Remembers, J. O'Conor; *Bad News,* E. Barrett	298
Lest She Should Wake, I. C. Benson; *Blackout,* W. S. Barnard	299
Snow Rhapsody, V. Meakin	299
The Never-Never! K. Toovey; *Words,* D. R. W. Carr	300
Variations on a Theme, John Haden	301
Death In Sleep, J. Sackville Martin	302
The Relation of Music to Poetry, Elode Collins	303
Rooks at Evening, G. Hunkin	305
T. S. Eliot and the Lay Reader, III, E. M. Stephenson	306
Dynamics of American Poetry: XCIV, Alice Hunt Bartlett	309
To the Editor: A Royal Academy of Poetry, P. E. Leaver, Arthur Row; The Two Alans, H. W. Harding; The Source of Kubla Khan, Howard Parsons; Whither Poetry, E. Curt Peters: Essentials of Poetry, Ailsa Lovell; On the Genesis of Poetry, Vere Arnot; A Letter from Malta, J. Aquilina; Life and the Poet, Clive Sansom	313
The Premium Editor's Report; Huns Over Bath, Charles Whitby; After Hearing Christmas Humphreys, Theodora Roscoe; Immortality, Sgt. H. Compton; Gerard Manley Hopkins, Lancelot de G. Sieveking	321
The Poetry of Europe and other Reviews	326
The Tennyson Commemoration and other Notices	ii, etc.
Verse Speaking Auditions Notices	v

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TENNYSON

[After Fifty Years]

TENNYSON died on October 6th, 1892, in his eighty-fourth year. As usually happens with the fame of a great man, fortunate or not to live so long, a reaction against it had set in some little while before this; it gained strength, in 1914 was met in full career, challenged, and (one had hoped) reasonably disposed of by Dr. A. C. Bradley in a protest at once polite and convincing. But the late war and the disillusionment that followed gave it a new lease of life: for close upon another twenty years scarcely a single young man of letters had a good word to say of Tennyson.

This of course, provoked at first a painful reconsideration, and after it, a long-drawn out annoyance in those of us who remembered what he had meant to them in youth; to a boy for instance, who had found rapture in:

> There is sweet music here that softer falls
> Than petals from blown roses on the grass,
> Or night-dews on still waters between walls
> Of shadowy granite, in a gleaming pass;
> Music that gentlier on the spirit lies
> Than tir'd eyelids upon tir'd eyes . . . .

or had charged among the garden bushes chanting "The Lady of Shalott."

Biologically, the reaction conformed with nature and was healthy enough. Each generation has its idols and that its successor should call these in question implies vitality, with the instinct at least for improvement. The other day, in a dispute between the merits of day schools and boarding schools, it was conceded that if a boy went back daily to a "cultured" home it was the ideal answer: a foolish and highly dangerous answer to my thinking; such habitual contact with a parent's opinions being pretty sure to check the growth of a young mind, if not to chain and pauperise it. So, considering how effete a second-rate imitation of Tennyson could be, how catching the instinct, how numerous the imitators. I hold the reaction to have been salutary as well as natural. The same thing, or the like, happened to Byron, to Dickens. Both, being great writers, have "come back" in the estimation of all critics who count, and all the more surely, as time has cleared their virtues and left these outstanding above their considerable faults. If the recognition of Tennyson has been overlong on the way, we have not far to seek the main contributory cause. He was at once eminently Victorian in outlook and popularity, and an upholder of an aristocratic tradition on the edge of the death duties, and the earlier attacks upon "the stately homes of England." *Therefore,* ran the absurd logic, *as a representative he represented everything we choose to lump together as Victorian* industrialism, *laissez faire,* snobbery ("The

Lord of Burleigh"), or snobbery inverted ("Lady Clare Vere de Vere"), or Darwinism, or doubts about Darwinism, or Prince Albert, or The Charge of the Light Brigade, or sentimentality, or insular patriotism, or waiting for a train at Coventry, or any half-dozen things sufficiently confused to be sneered at as of a piece.

But now that he has lain fifty years in the Abbey, let us count a few of our blessings in his greatness, proceeding from the lesser of these to the more important.

To begin with, then, he has left to all of us who write a high example of courage under discouragement. His Cambridge friends had gone far to spoil the young man with their praises and extravagant prophecies before, at twenty-three, he put forth the volume of *Poems* which brought down on him the blundering mace of the *Quarterly*—"Millers' daughters, poor things, have been so generally betrayed by their sweethearts that it is refreshing to find that Mr. Tennyson has united himself to *his* Miller's daughter in lawful wedlock." That was the sort of stuff; but the *Quarterly* carried weight, almost authority, and Tennyson has confessed "I remember all the malignant things said against me, but little of the praise." Close upon this stroke came the death of his dearest friend and worshipper, Arthur Hallam, and Tennyson hid with his wounds for ten years. But in that time, so long for a young man with his spurs yet to win, how was he occupied? Apart from meditating a great memorial to Hallam he was endlessly working to improve his art, even, in a bitter modesty, working on the very passages the reviewers had scorned. As a combination of self-reliance with self-discipline, this record will surely take some beating.

The reward of it came with the two 1842 volumes, which not only surpassed the hopes of his friends, but took the suffrages of the public and laid the foundation of a fame which, as it rose by stages, grew almost reverential. His consciousness of high purpose and high merit kept pace with it, and poets who so often complain now-a-days that our body politic lacks room and respect for them, must at least acknowledge that above any poet in our history he asserted and won the dignities they claim for their services. This of itself deserves some recognition. But—better far—they should respect the memory of this man who, while honours came to him, undeviatingly studied and experimented to improve his craft. His varied proclaimed experiments witness to this, but a little more evidently then (let us say) "The Daisy" and the lines "To F. D. Maurice." Or, for a specimen of art concealing art, let "In Memoriam" be examined. I take it to be the longest elegy in our language: the stanza is simplicity itself: the subject, a young man, of private station, known to few, and remarkable only for his promise. Here we have all the elements assembled to invite monotony in the theme, tedium in the reader. Yet, by alter-

nations of private and universal sorrow and solace, of hope and doubt, by pauses through which the sustaining passion of itself carries the reader forward, this elegy of all but epic length holds one's interest to the atoning end. If "sentiment" be counted against him, with such early excesses of it as in "The May Queen" and "The Lord of Burleigh," let it be remembered that almost all the strong men of his age were sentimental, that out of their strength came forth a sweetness that too often inclined into stickiness. It were hard, for example, to separate the sentiment from the wisdom of Dickens or of Ruskin, to cast it out. With Tennyson, at any rate, it went with a manliness, a sturdy confidence in his age and in England's destiny that, though we had to take it with sentiment as its condition, were a medicine worth our resorting to in these days.

To conclude with an unchallengeable distinction among Tennyson's merits, I must steal a quotation from Dr. Bradley:

> "I believe he is unsurpassed, and I suspect he is unequalled, among English poets in two things, one the accuracy and delicacy of his perceptions; and the other, the felicity of his translation into language of that which he perceives."

The generations to whom Tennyson spoke he taught to observe the large and minute phenomena of nature with freshened eyes and wits for their beauty, their meaning; and men remembered and spoke among themselves of these revelations *in his words* and none other. In Wordsworthian phrase he gave them eyes, he gave them ears—eyes to note for their souls' health, "a million emeralds break from the ruby-budded lime," the yew whose "gloom is kindled at the tips and passes into gloom again," or "The Thrush," with his mere bubbling, half choking ecstasy. But examples might be quoted by the hundred.

And I might multiply reasons why we should celebrate the memory of this great man to-day. For fifty years he enjoyed such fame as falls to the lot of few poets in their lifetime; yet while carrying it with dignity, as his due he never suffered it to deflect his labour after perfection. For another fifty "Clouds and darkness closed upon Camelot," until the Gleam, that had waned to a wintry glimmer—

> Drew to the valley
> Named of the shadow;
> And slowly brightening
> Out of the glimmer . . . .
> Fell on the shadow
> No longer a shadow
> But clothed with The Gleam.

ARTHUR QUILLER COUCH.

THE HIDDEN TENNYSON

MUCH criticism of Tennyson during the last thirty years has been criticism of Victorianism rather than of the poet. The two can never, of course, be wholly dissociated. For few poets have so monumentally represented in certain aspects of his work the temper of his age. Yet "Victorianism" itself is a generalisation which cannot survive a close scrutiny. So far as it means or meant all that we of the twentieth century find most anti-pathetic, the smug, the moralistic, the stuffily over-dressed and over-furnished, the pompous and insincere, it excludes much that was most real in the Victorian age. To do justice to the sixty years during which Tennyson wrote we should need to discriminate almost between every decade and to look beneath the upholstered surface for which we may well have reasonable distaste. The second half of the nineteenth century may not have been quite so dark and disastrous a period of English history as Humbert Wolfe claimed that it was, because it was steadily and remorselessly destroying the old civilization without creating a new. But we can see now that beneath its confident and materially prosperous exterior the forces that would destroy it were growing at an alarming speed. The conflict in men's minds between the new claims of natural science and the old assurances of religion was only one aspect of the gathering challenge of a mechanistic to a humanistic civilization. Nothing less than the disintegration of the whole individualistic culture, which had originated with the Renaissance and the Reformation and signed its own death-warrant in the horrors of the Industrial Revolution, had visibly begun, for those with eyes to see it. To-day, we witness its actual death-agonies and in the presence of them the anti-Victorian distaste of twenty years ago seems too often to have been a reaction against the superficial and unimportant.

In thus coming nearer to the realities of Tennyson's age we should come nearer to the reality of Tennyson himself and reach beyond "Victorianism" to the fundamental poetic quality of his work. There is a curious parallelism here with Wordsworth. For many years after Wordsworth's death he continued to be regarded as a highly respectable laureate who might well have worn the gaiters of his brother, the Bishop. It was only gradually that the strangeness, the "otherness" of his genius, which A. C. Bradley stressed in his famous lecture, came fully to be recognised and that "strange fits of passion," not calm bouts of platitude, were seen to underlie all that was most original in his utterance.

Tennyson, too, was admired by his own generation chiefly for the moral, theological, sentimental or pseudo-dramatic parts of his work. The dignified bard, personifying poetically the virtues of the Prince-Consort which he had incongruously fathered upon King Arthur, was the figure which bulked largely in the public eye, and the "Confessions

of a Second-rate Sensitive Mind" with its cry of anguish,

> O weary life! O weary death!
> O spirit and heart made desolate!
> O damnéd vacillating state!

was forgotten or dismissed as an echo of morbid adolescence. Yet this view of Tennyson and his poetry had not at one time been that of other sensitive minds, of such men, for example, as Aubrey de Vere who wrote of the startling originality of the early poems—"about that originality there was for us a wild inexplicable magic and a deep pathos, though hardly as simple as Wordsworth's pathos, and with nothing of its homeliness." To anyone, indeed, who had wished to see it the dark melancholy that was the background of Tennyson's thought was continuously apparent at least until the publication of *Maud* in 1855, and it haunted many of his later poems, if often, then, in the form of premonitions of social disaster. The publication, too, in recent years of his *Unpublished Early Poems* and of his astonishingly precocious play, *The Devil And The Lady*, written at the age of fourteen, have shown that this secret melancholy and neurotic distress were deep-rooted in his nature, though the play reveals even more clearly a passionate Elizabethan gusto which was soon to be repressed. To the end of his life there survived, indeed, beneath the recoiling sensibility, fastidiousness, and moral dignity which he showed to the world a more healthy and elemental strain. And perhaps the secret of that "dark undercurrent woe" which kept breaking through the crust of moral earnestness, as in the lines from "The Two Voices,"

> Again the voice spake unto me:
> 'Thou art so steep'd in misery
> Surely 'twere better not to be.
> Thine anguish will not let thee sleep,
> Nor any train of reason keep:
> Thou canst not think but thou wilt weep.'

was that of a passionate nature driven in on itself. For this the age in which he lived was in some measure responsible. But it was not the only cause. A poet is free to react in different ways to his age and Tennyson reacted as he did because he was made that way. In his private life, too, fate dealt him just the blow which an innate melancholy had, as it were, foreseen. Arthur Hallam's death in 1833 made real to him, as nothing else could have, the despondency which previously had been an objectless emotion inspiring the lonely music of "Mariana" or of "The Lady of Shalott" or the self-torment of the "Confessions." For fifteen years he withdrew to wrestle in himself with a desolation no longer fanciful, but actual, with a passionate longing, a grieving hunger, which at first, it seemed, nothing could assuage. The fruit of that struggle was "In Memoriam." In that great poem he expressed the deepest sorrow of his

life, and in reasoning with it translated what had been a floating introspective mood into an interpretation of the everlasting issues of life and death. He also released thereby something of the passion which, through repression, had been a self-consuming fire and which informed all that was rarest and most compelling in *Maud,* The morbidity of the hero of *Maud* revealed, however, something that Tennyson never outgrew, yet which underlay or was infused in all his greatest poetry. That it was responsible for much that was maudlin is equally true. But the sense of cosmic sorrow, of the infinite pathos of life, of those "tears from the depth of some divine despair" that

> Rise in the heart, and gather to the eyes,
> In looking on the happy Autumn fields,
> And thinking of the days that are no more,

was at the very heart of his loveliest lyrical singing even when he heard the horns of Elfland faintly blowing or summoned his reader to seek with his "Ulysses" a newer world, to dare the perilous gulfs, since

> It may be we shall touch the Happy Isles,
> And see the great Achilles, whom we knew.

His nostalgia for those Happy Isles, which in the "Lotos-Eaters" could be as voluptuous as it was keyed to heroic endeavour in "Ulysses," was conditioned by his age already dimmed by middle-class commercialism. Because Tennyson was a poet, sensitive to the inner pulse of things, recoiling from all that violated the beauty and freshness which life intended, he felt, as we to-day can all too clearly see, that humanity had entered on a false path which, if pursued, could only end in appalling disaster. The era of the machine and the financier had begun, and although as a national laureate he did his best to salute the possibilities of expansion and human betterment, the real poet in him already felt the threat of those "Satanic mills" to all that was comely and sensitive in the civilisation which man had so laboriously built up. The artist in him as well as the man with his deep hidden roots in something primeval clung to the classical pattern of life as a defence against the chaos of elemental forces and the clash and clang of machines which man no longer controlled. Yet in mood and feeling he was a child of the romantic movement, divining how precariously the traditional classical and humanistic culture survived over an abyss which already seemed to be opening to engulf it. What has been called his compromise was an attempt to combine the best of the old and the new. He was, in fact, the one great English poet, as Mr. Scaife has pointed out in a suggestive essay, to attempt to express the physical and intellectual rhythms which were being shaped by railways and the growth of scientific theories in forms modelled in the classical tradition. He was, also, one of the first, despite all his attempts at

objective dramatisation, to withdraw poetry into the subjective world from which to-day it has not yet succeeded in extricating itself.

I have not attempted here any general appreciation of his work. Much of it can be seen to-day to have reflected the false compromise which was the uneasy reaction of an age that felt its foundations crumbling but couldn't begin to build anew. But beneath the compromise in Tennyson himself was the stress of a true conflict. Beneath the "muffled poet of domestic horizons" was a lonely spirit, wild as the eagle of his poem, who watched from his mountain walls and longed at times like a thunderbolt to fall. His age deprecated thunderbolts and he accepted outwardly its ruling. But all that was untamed and forlorn within him resented the conventions which caution and worldly interest approved. And it was from these innermost depths of his nature that the music of his greatest verse flowed. There is a great deal of it and it will live as long as English poetry does. For it was modulated by a consummate craftsman. Personal feeling and impersonal craftsmanship met and married in his greatest verse and the subjective was crystallised by a conscious art of which he was an exquisite master. When all that was second-rate in his philosophy, trite in his moralising or bathos in his sentiment is forgotten, he will be remembered as the supreme lyrical poet of an age whose mortal disease he so deeply sensed and so melodiously resolved. HUGH I'A. FAUSSET.

[Author of *Tennyson, A Modern Portrait* (Cape, Traveller's Series), *Whitman, Poet of Democracy; A Modern Prelude*; *The Proving of Psyche*; *The Lost Leader, A Study of Wordsworth;* and volumes on Cowper, Coleridge and other poets, with editions of their poems. Mr. Fausset, who has published several volumes of poems and has been a reviewer for *The Times Literary Supplement, Manchester Guardian, Yorkshire Post,* etc., since 1919, was the Chancellor's Medallist for English Verse at Cambridge.]

AN AFTERNOON WITH THE BRONTES
JULY, 1942

LET me be timeless for a little longer—
Yes, I know that needs mending, let it wait.
I have been on pilgrimage to the eternals,
To-day I haunt the moors of the lost sisters,
Outpost of life lived to the edge of death;
And know that if the bomber shattered Haworth
And the last churchyard fragment blew to air,
The memory of that longheld fort of the spirit,
Enduring, stormy valiant, unsurrendering,
Would live and fruit in the heart's depth of thousands,
A picture globed in the soul's chronicles
Of Britain's breed, still living, here, beyond.

REDCLIFFE MCKIE.

MY RECOLLECTIONS OF TENNYSON

THERE never was a time when I did not know Tennyson. I have told elsewhere how in the summer of 1855 my young mother, seated on the top of a haystack, first made acquaintance with the Bard, as his Freshwater friends called him, and how great a friendship ensued between the two families. I must confess however, that the tall figure draped in the long black cloak and crowned by the large black felt hat, inspired more awe than affection in my childish bosom. This, although I was considered his "pet" among the children of our circle, and was often taken up in his arms and kissed, an honour of which, my recollection alas! is chiefly that his beard scrubbed my face. Beards were not so common then as they were soon to become.

My uncle, William Philpot, when staying with my parents, says in a letter, that Tennyson "spoke of knowing people by their smell. Not any perfume or unpleasant smell, but simply a special smell." Whereupon, uncle quoted to him some lines from the earliest Tennysonian publication, *Poems by Two Brothers:*

> Who can tell
> Why the smell
> Of violets recalls the prime
> Of youth and buried time.

He had tried to get back or otherwise have destroyed all copies of this book, and his comment on the quotation was, "What a shame to remind me of those old things!" but added, "I don't mind that particular piece."

He expressed the boredom he naturally felt at the number of poems sent him. "Everyone who writes poetry," he said "should set up his own printing press and print his poems for himself and his friends." [It may be noted that his successor in the Laureateship, Robert Bridges, did this]. "If a man wants to be read and admired by the world, it is another thing. He will at any rate have a copy of his poems preserved in the British Museum." It does indeed seem an impertinence on the part of the poetasters to have sent their poems to him to read.

Another passage in my uncle's letters reminds me of what was to me, in my childhood, an embarrassing episode. I may say that nicknames were the fashion in my generation, and only two of our family of seven were called by their real names. My nickname was Daisy. It might have been worse.

I have said that Tennyson dined at five o'clock, and the children of those dining with him came in to dessert. On one of these occasions Tennyson demanded of us that we should recite Gray's Elegy. I happened to be the only one who knew it by heart and was therefore forced to recite it. But I had barely begun the poem, when to my relief, he took the lines out of my childish mouth, and recited the poem in his fine bass voice.

But when he came to the line, "And leaves the world to darkness and to me," he substituted "Daisy" for "me"—because it was my bed-time. I blushed and my uncle, quoting from Tennyson's recently published poem "Maud," told him that he had trodden on a daisy and left it rosy. The Poet may well have been pleased to find that one himself a poet, had read and remembered his much depreciated poem. He himself defended the poem, which he called his "poor bantling," by saying that he was like a mother, who always prefers the weakliest of her children. I hope that in after years he realised that "Maud" was admired by a generation which had ceased to be interested in the thought of "In Memoriam," while continuing to admire its landscapes.

Tennyson was, as might be expected, greatly interested in the pronunciation of English. He deplored the narrowing of our vowels and the general clipping of our words. The word "shone" he rightly protested, should not be pronounced "shonn," but with a broad "o." He instanced Shelley's use of "glode" for glided. The word "knowledge" he said, should not be pronounced "knollege," but with the emphasis on the "know." This I promised him to do, and in the course of a long life, I have not forgotten my promise. MARGARET L. WOODS.

(Mrs. Margaret L. Woods is a daughter of the distinguished Victorian, Dean Bradley, of Westminster, and a sister of the erudite Oxford Professor of Poetry, quoted by Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch. Our famous contributor has alternated between poetry and novel writing. One of the most notable of her later poems, "Good Friday," appeared in THE POETRY REVIEW twenty years ago.)

TO THE DARK LADY OF A SONNET

I HAD not thought to know one small regret
For years advancing—much content has age,
Has marked the counsel wise of many a page,
And lives more cautiously and calmly ; yet,
When my admiring thoughts on you are bent,
And ever since we met they so incline,
I would renounce this placid state of mine,
To taste again youth's thrilling discontent.
With you to tread the happy hills, or grey
Defiles of desperate sorrow, and to know
An ecstasy in joy or bleak dismay,
Were better than when roads all level go.
Your beauty makes me long to cast away
The separating years, and journey so.

CAMPBELL FLETCHER.

POETS OF THE TWO WORLD WARS

Such was my Singing, Robert Nichols (Collins 7s. 6d.)
Poems of this War, Edited by Ledward and Strang (C.U. Press 6s.)
Soldiers, This Solitude, Alan Rook (Routledge 2s. 6d.)
Dispersal Point, John Pudney (John Lane 2s. 6d.)
Thy Muse hath Wings, G. Eades (Pen-in-Hand Publishing Co. 3s. 6d.)
The Van Pool, Keidrych Rhys (Routledge 2s. 6d.)
The Iron Laurel, Sidney Keyes (Routledge 2s. 6d.)
Wounded Thammuz, John Heath-Stubbs (Routledge 2s. 6d.)
Invitation and Warning, Henry Treece (Faber 6s.)
The Expanding Mirror, Peter Yates (Chatto & Windus 4s. 6d.)
Arctic Conditions Edward Ellul (The Author, 15 Queensbury Place, S.W.7 2s. 6d.)
Auden and After, Francis Scarfe (Routledge 8s. 6d.)
Poetry in War-Time, Edited by Tambimuttu (Faber 6s.)

IN September, 1859, Charles Dickens, fresh from his first reading of the first volume of the *Idylls of the King,* dashed off a letter to John Forster, "What a pleasure it is," he exclaimed, "to read *a man who can write.*" The reviewer who takes Robert Nichols' *Such was my Singing* from a pile of volumes of modern verse may well repeat this cry of gratitude. For, in days when craftsmanship seems to have lost its standards and the artist his patience, Nichols remains a true craftsman, with superb and confident control of his material. He can make words sing, dance, wail and thunder. He has fire, passion, philosophy, imagination, gaiety, wit and a power of satire delightful as it is deadly; he uses traditional metres and rhythms with such subtlety and freshness that they seem excitingly new and he has a sense of form and a concentration which seldom allows him to waste his powers in irrelevance or prolixity. In fact, he has every gift which can qualify a poet for a place in the great succession of our English romantics.

The present volume contains a representative selection from his poems of the last twenty years, and he has prefaced it with a full statement of his poetic creed, which deserves to be read and pondered by all who care for poetry. Robert Nichols first came into prominence during the last Great War, when he published volumes (in 1916 and 1917) which contained some of the most sincere and moving verses which those terrible years produced. The new volume contains some of the best of these. Inevitably, one misses some old favourites, such as "Farewell to place of Comfort" and "The Approach," but those that are preserved strike as piercingly to-day as they did in those grim days of their first appearance. There follow selections from *Aurelia and Other Poems,* published in 1920, which contained the markedly Shakespearian sequence, "Sonnets to Aurelia." Between 1920 and 1934, Nichols published no

book of poems, though he issued several plays and proseworks. It seems, however, that he continued to write verse, and Book Two of the present volume contains a selection of the poems written at this time, which shows that his powers were steadily maturing. These include the superbly rhetorical lines to d'Annunzio and some lyrics distinguished for their exquisite lightness and grace of rhythm, such as this stanza from "Arrogant Eros":

> Where the seeds of sunrise brighten
> Far above Olympus' brow
> Arrogant Eros, downward winging,
> Looses from his thunderous bow
> Shafts that whirr and shafts that lighten,
> Shafts that with a sound of singing
> Shower upon mankind below.

Very moving is the "Elegy for Phillip Heseltine":

> Wildheart is dead. Plumage of heavenly hue,
> Bright eye, bold wing, ardour and grief and rage,
> Some snatches of sweet song—all, all too few!—
> Then the dead feathers dulling in the cage.
> Wildheart is dead. The story's nothing new.
>
> The story's nothing new. Wildheart is dead,
> And now the all-too-intolerably wise
> May stroke the chin and sigh and wag the head.
> To the devil with them and their pious lies!
> Lord, they mean well. But see the wing half spread.
>
> Wildheart is dead and the vehement wings at rest
> Battered so hard against the wire and wood.
> Wildheart, dear Wildheart, lie now where you should.
> Wildheart is still. He has whistled his brave best.
> Gathered, heart's brother, to your poet's breast!

After the interval of play and prose writing, Nichols produced in 1934, a satire called *Fisbo,* which contained some of the most brilliant and entertaining work in this vein written during the present century. The Third Book of the present volume gives some telling extracts from it, but it is not possible for quotation to do justice to its wit and sparkle.

This brings me to the Fourth and last Book, which comprises *Work in Progress,* not all, however, very recent in composition. Among the poems in this book are "A Spanish Triptych," published as a detached fragment in 1936, and excerpts from a Don Juan drama, a work of very large scope, carried out with great vigour, wit and eloquence. Of neither of these fine poems is it possible to give any adequate idea by short extracts. There are, however, in this section, some beautiful short poems, one of which ("Evenstar") I will quote in full. These show that Nichols' lyric gift is still at full strength.

Evenstar, still evenstar,
If this twilight thou dost shine
On a more unhappy head,
On tears lonelier than mine,
Vainer prayers and deeper sighs,
Take sweet Spirit, thou that art
Comforter of our despairs,
All the prayers perforce unsaid,
All the sighs I cannot sigh,
All the tears I cannot shed.
Brim his eyes and fill his heart,
Who, my everlasting kin,
Broods alone, afar, apart.
Bring, ah, bring him that surcease
From unsolaceable pain
Which nor tears, nor prayers, nor sighs,
No, nor even the divine
Solace of thy eternal peace
Can, O Evenstar, make mine!

Finally, before saying a reluctant farewell to Robert Nichols, I will refer by way of contrast to the "Harlots' Catch," one of a set of songs intended for Don Juan and a truly exhilarating bit of bawdry.

The volume of *Poems of this War,* edited by Patricia Ledward and Colin Strang, gives an excellent opportunity of comparing the work of the younger poets with that of a leader of the generation produced by the first World War—and let me say at once, that the volume contains much that is of great interest. It is never easy for a reader who has the misfortune to be on the wrong side of fifty to understand the point of view of the under thirties—especially when these have grown to maturity in such a period of flux and chaos. But I am struck with the sincerity of these young writers and with their determination to express, regardless of convention, what they feel to be true. Not all of them discard conventional technique. Jock Curle and Peter Baker, for example, have some excellent poems clearly and forcibly expressed. So has Timothy Corsellis, who has already lost his life on Active Service. Francis Gelder, Patricia Ledward, Clifford Dyment are amongst the others in this class. But many of the most distinguished talents amongst these writers are feeling out for new and more fluid rhythms in which to express their reactions to these years of chaos, and for a use of language, half suggestive, half symbolical, to record shades of feeling which seem to them to transcend the boundaries of accepted idioms. The most skilful of these writers is Laurence Whistler, who contributes several interesting poems, the most striking of which is the last in the volume—a strange symbolical ballad called "The Burning-Glass." The following lines, describing a blitzed city, are good, but unusually straight-forward, examples of his style:

The city twitched like a martyr's mouth
At each turn of the screw.
The city howled and got each night
Its brief and metal dew :
Solid house to-day—to-morrow,
Gap the wind looks through.

More characteristic, perhaps, is the long poem "In Time of Suspense," which appeared originally in THE POETRY REVIEW.

Whistler, though his idiom is unconventional and sometimes obscure, keeps more or less to traditional metres. Alan Rook, another poet of strong individuality, is more essentially of the 1940s. "The Retreat" is a good example of his work :

Faint now behind the secret eyes of these
The sleepers, the dreamers, the exact and delicate
Flowering of our age, dusk steals. And over

The trees and rivers, over the golden meadows and vines the glow
Of death is spreading. I one with them
Feel the pulse stir strangely. Now

Evening introduces her sudden crisis
Of vermillion and shadows. Silence falls
Over the cultivated secrecy of these faces.

I too with these have suffered. I too have felt
The richness pass and the inexplicable beauty
Of memory fading—lost in the present. Defeat,

Humiliation, and the dreaded tremendous excitement
Of movement and change were ours, in our blood, our fever.
Not alone in the aeroplane or the shell, not confined

To the trickery and lies, the treacherous bullet. No,
But even in fellowship, the touch of hand, in the quiet
Word, in the eyes of a daisy, or the timelessness of trees
Lies fear. Death haunts the flowers and cities.

So now, leaning against my gun, in these fields and
Plains of Belgium, conscious of the warp and fret
Of spring on the hedges and forests, I accept ! I accept !

For there lies all our power ; the power of the young and the lonely,
I know that the past is lies, and the present only
Important. I see in life service, and in dying an end

Of loving. I know that the evil in our nature
Is our fear of history, our incapacity to suffer,
And our poor cold dread of the crises of the future.

The sun bows. And now the earth, the mother,
Is cold. The patient suffering of these my friends, their
Lucid sorrow, is my burden and my song.

Rook's verse can be studied in more detail in *Soldiers, This Solitude*, one of Routledge's "New Poets" Series. This contains twenty-five poems (one

a sequence of ten lyrics), and shows that the poet is steadily maturing an interesting and distinctive talent.

Amongst poets of the present war not included in Ledward and Strang's anthology, are John Pudney, whose poetry is familiar to readers of the *Daily Chronicle,* and Flying Officer G. Eades. John Pudney's "Dispersal Point" is full of strong, sincere writing, with a gift for vivid phrase, as when he describes how the Balloon Barrage Corps of Thames-side pioneers

> In a preposterous logic, weather-eyed,
> Drill the grave elephantine flock
> Poised on the eternal tide.

Flying Officer Eades has greater fluency. He writes in the traditional manner, with a good sense of rhythm and language and an evident enjoyment, which he succeeds in communicating to the reader.

There are three other volumes in my parcel from Routledge's series. Unfortunately, the paper supply will only allow me to deal with these very summarily. Keidrych Rhys is known as the editor of an earlier war anthology—*Poems from the Forces.* He seems to be fighting hard to find a personal method of expression. Alas! the dust of conflict too often obscures his meaning, but now and then one gets glimpses of a robust boyhood on a Welsh farm, which justify the hope of something more fruitful, when these teething troubles are mastered. Sidney Keyes, too, is still in the grip of obscurity, but he has power and an ear for sound and rhythm. Unfortunately, when he attempts a poem of any length, the mind has to be so concentrated on disentangling the detail that it is almost impossible to grasp the general meaning and purpose. Now and then he writes with reasonable clarity and then he gives good hopes for the future.

John Heath-Stubbs, in his "Wounded Thammuz" shews a rich vocabulary and a grasp of rhythm and telling phrase which should one day produce notable work. This long poem, for all its skill—both in the traditional and modern modes, which the poet seems able to alternate at will—leaves the reader unsatisfied and wondering what it is all about.

Henry Treece is a poet of stronger gifts. At the moment he is subject to marked influences—William Blake, folk song, and John Donne particularly, but he has undoubtedly a fresh and original talent. About half the book consists of short lyrics of two or three stanzas each, in which the first two of these influences are paramount. Many of these poems are very delightful:

> Oh, little child, see how the flower
> You plucked bleeds on the iron ground;
> Bend down, your ears may catch its voice,
> A passionless low sobbing sound.

Oh, man, put up your sword and see
The brother that you did to death;
There is no hatred in his eye,
No curses crackle in his breath.

and "Wedding Song":

You shall have roses, my sweet,
And a lantern to frighten the owl,
And a nutmeg tree in the garden,
And pears in a golden bowl.

And I will buy you a bird
With feathers bright as blood,
And a door with lock and key
For our lonely house in the wood.

Sometimes he strikes a more individual note as in the poem which begins:

How sweet are the flutes, whose mellow notes
Travel together through flower-flecked fields,
Husband and wife; Question and Answer
Harnessed in harmony, waking old worlds.

The remainder of the volume consists of two sequences, one lyric and the other in twenty-five sonnets, and it is in these two that the influence of Donne and the seventeenth century is most felt, e.g.,

When Spring's caress and when the winds of love
Undo the dog that whines within my blood.

Unfortunately, these sequences lose much of their due effect from their obscurity. The thread is lost in the effort of concentration required to master the detail. The result is a feeling of monotony and dissatisfaction.

Indeed, a comparison of these younger writers with Robert Nichols' work makes me wonder whether the attempt to extend the boundaries of language does not have the unexpected result of restricting its effective scope. This result is discernible in *The Expanding Mirror,* by Peter Yates, an intelligent writer, whose work, for all his sincerity and care, seems to lack just some spice of life and variety.

Arctic Conditions, by Edward Ellul, is lively enough. The writer has a happy trick of spinning airy sonnets with a speed and lightness of rhythm which make one sometimes think of Byron's Don Juan, but more often of Punch. His book is being sold entirely in aid of the Malta Fund.

From what I have written it will be seen that the young poets of the 1940's are ranging through many moods and many keys. Anyone who wants a comprehensive view of their schools and tendencies will be much helped by Francis Scarfe's *Auden and After.* This book, in eighteen essays, surveys the work of Day Lewis, Auden, Macneice, Spender, Prokosch, Dylan Thomas, George Barker, and some of the younger poets already

mentioned. Mr. Scarfe does not always succeed in bringing light where light is most needed, but he writes with knowledge and sympathy, and his book is worthy of careful study.

Very opportunely, Messrs. Faber and Faber have just issued *Poetry in War-time,* an anthology edited by Tambimuttu, which contains recent poems by most of those whose poetry is discussed by Mr. Scarfe, including half-a-dozen examples of Mr. Scarfe's own work. These two volumes provide convenient means for a study of the various movements and schools of poetic thought that have arisen during the past few years, but they leave a doubt in one's mind whether excessive ingenuity and labour is not being expended by some of our younger writers, on the evolution of indirect and symbolist methods of expression, and whether the results achieved justify the intellectual strain imposed on the reader. Perhaps much of the work of these younger poets should be regarded as research work, which will ultimately give us the benefit of a freer technique and a wider range of expression, but the results of which are at present of interest mainly to experts. C.T.

THE PATRIOT

NO flags wave.
When a man dies
by his own hand
no bugles blow.
A shallow grave
scooped in the sand
is all he'll know

When a man dies
by his own hand
because he knows
his native land
is sick with horrors
cruelty and hate
and he no longer
can lift up his head.

They do not give him
burial of state,
no honour for the dead.
No flags wave
over his grave
no bugles blow.

CELIA E. BANGHAM.

EZRA POUND

EZRA POUND has often been severely criticised in the POETRY REVIEW and many doubts thrown on his rendering of Latin. He deserves, however, to be considered from another angle, for this American writer of prose and poetry has shown in his amazing literary career outstanding ability.

He was born in 1885, and his best work was achieved when he was between twenty and thirty years of age. In his introduction to "Selected Poems of Ezra Pound," published by Faber and Faber Ltd., T. S. Eliot says that: "Certain of the early poems are obviously affected by the technical influence of Yeats." Most young poets model themselves on a writer they particularly admire and strive to follow in his footsteps. Very often the result is extremely good, and although it is written in the same style, and possibly form, of that poet, it can still be original and contain an air of freshness which makes the poem more attractive.

T. S. Eliot also says on page X of the same book:

> "Poets may be divided into those who develop technique, those who imitate technique, and those who invent technique. When I say 'invent', I should use inverted commas, for invention would be irreproachable if it were possible. "Invention" is wrong only because it is impossible. I mean that the difference between the 'development' and the 'sport' is, in poetry, a capital one. There are two kinds of 'sports' in poetry, in the floricultural sense. One is the limitation of development, and the other is the imitation of some idea of originality. The former is commonplace, a waste product of civilization. The latter is contrary to life. The poem which is absolutely original is absolutely bad."

He means that if it is absolutely original, it lacks the external realities of the world to-day, and does not appeal to the general public.

Personally I do not agree with him. What does it matter if a poem is contrary to life? So long as it contains the essence of beauty and flows along smoothly, why should it be bad?

Originality is a thing that a young poet should strive to cultivate, otherwise he begins by being stale. He must not be confused either by the exact definition of the word "original." It does not mean that you cannot write a poem about a well-known subject or object; it means that you must try to cultivate new ways of putting your poetry into verse, and naturally it is a good thing to formulate new ideas. All forms of newness are good, and one can spend endless hours in search of new thoughts and ideas. If the young poet once gets into his head that originality is a crime, by confusing the meaning of the word, he is lost, for it will take years of patience to get out of this rut. One can recognise Ezra Pound's leaning towards Yeats in "The Tree." It is a lovely poem and appears in *Personae of Ezra Pound, 1908, 1909, 1910.*

> I stood still and was a tree amid the wood,
> Knowing the truth of things unseen before;

Of Daphne and the laurel bow
And that god-feasting couple old
That grew elm-oak amid the wold.
'Twas not until the gods had been
Kindly entreated, and been brought within
Unto the hearth of their hearts home
That they might do this wonder thing;
Nathless I have been a tree amid the wood
And many a new thing understood
That was rank folly to my head before.

This is real poetry. A pure poem that contains all the essentials of poetry, which is a relief, for a great deal of Mr. Pound's later work consists in stringing together meaningless words with the excuse that it is Free Verse. This is all very well, but it seems a mistake to bring it into the category of poetry. No doubt it is original, but what is the point of being original at the expense of losing the poetry? I fail to see this point of view. It seems to me a pose, as if the poet were trying to see how much of this style of "verse" the budding blue-stockings will swallow. They probably do not understand this writing at all or grasp what it is meant to convey, if it is meant to convey anything. All the same they fling themselves into ecstasies of delight over this new form of literature which is thrust upon them. It would seem to be a "stunt" of the poet, if one is permitted to say so, either to gather together these blue stockings, or to laugh at them. Who knows though, how often people write these startling things with their tongues in their cheek? Consider:

MOEURS CONTEMPORAINES

MR. STYRAX.

I

Mr. Hecatomb Styrax, the owner of a large estate and of large muscles,
a "blue" and a climber of mountains, has married at the age of 23,
He being at that age a virgin,
The term "virgo" being male in medieval latinity;
His ineptitudes
Have driven his wife from one religious excess to another.
She has abandoned the vicar
For he was lacking in vehemence;
She is now the high-priestess
Of a modern and ethical cult,
And even now Mr. Styrax
Does not believe in aesthetics.

II

His brother has taken to gipsies,
But the son-in-law of Mr. H. Styrax
Objects to perfumed cigarettes.

In the parlance of Niccolo Machiavellin :
'Thus things proceed in their circle';
And thus the empire is maintained.

This is clever and also amusing, but I do not see why it is published in a book of poems. It is neither poetry nor verse. The only line which can be called poetry is : "Thus things proceed in their circle," which moreover is a quotation. The exact definition of verse which is given in the Oxford dictionary is : "Metrical composition," *i.e.*, something that is written in metre. It perhaps can be called Free Verse which is described as : "versification in which different metres are mingled, or prosodical rules are disregarded." But that still does not explain why it should be entitled to appear in a book of poems.

Ezra Pound's style has, alas, like that of many other poets, changed as he has grown older, and not for the better. One might say his ideas have developed, but his poetry has suffered. His earlier verse, compared with his later works, is so much better, and contain the true poetry that everyone tries so hard to aim for. In his later verse he does not succeed in using the same simple attractive words as before. His imagination, once so vivid, does not possess the same keenness. He has lost the art of depicting his subjects in poetical language. He can no longer paint his picture of life in beautiful thoughts and words, which is the foundation of real poetry.

Pound was never a rich poet ; he never used beautiful words for the sake of using them. They always meant something ; and he was always able to put them in the right place, and produce a really fine piece of work. Like Pound, Arthur Waley has written and translated many lovely Chinese poems. He used the same simple attractive words, but in his poems after the Chinese style, not in his translations, he seems completely to lose the whole point of the poem. He cannot find the right words in which to express himself ; yet in his translations they seem to come quite easily. Pound, I think, is a far greater poet than Waley ; so much of his work is really good, and it is sad that in the last few years he has adopted a form of writing that seems insincere and meaningless, not in the least like the Ezra Pound of old. Anybody can write in this way if he chooses ; if he is also an Ezra Pound, or any of the others who write in the same style, he can depend on the acclamation of a certain section of the public, because no one belonging to the "Long Hair Brigade" would bring himself to confess that he neither liked nor understood its meaning. He would run the risk of giving away his pose of understanding the writings of his hero. He would be putting himself on the level of his non-"Long Hair" friends. It is not altogether a pose. These "Long Hairs" who say they think it is wonderful really do believe

that it is, because they have made themselves believe it for so long. It is a kind of game of "Follow my Leader," they stumble blindly on, never once trying to rearrange their thoughts, or to reason it all out. Poetry is definitely increasing, even though the same style of verse that I have been describing has been increasing too. Poets should consider their work very carefully, and try to educate the general public in the appreciation of good poetry.

It is comparatively easy to write outrageous verse, which attracts two kinds of public, those who read it for its coarseness; and those to whom we have already referred, who like to consider themselves "smart" and "modern." Money has been the root of the evil in a number of cases; chiefly because the poets who were creating good work could not find a market, as it did not interest the public. They could not afford to continue to write like that, so they had to adopt a new style. They became hypocritical and insincere through no fault of their own, and wrote these startling verses purely with the view to selling them. It is not the fault of the general public, as many of them have not been educated to appreciate good poetry, as it is seldom brought to their notice. People who appreciate good literature should also try to bring good poetry before the public eye; by doing so they would be helping those poets who are worse off than themselves. (This is what the Poetry Society has been trying to do for 33 years.) There is so much hidden talent that never comes to light, simply because the people who possess it cannot afford to put their work forward. Luckily, however, magazines dealing solely with the subjects of literature and art have been started. They have collected all the modern poets and writers and are encouraging them to write so that they will attract the public more and more. It is a pity that not more people know about poetry, but, I repeat, they are seldom encouraged to do so. They have a set idea in their heads that it is highbrow, which is all wrong, for much of it could not be more lowbrow.

It is a move in the right direction that poets of different nationalities should be encouraged to correspond with each other through the medium of these magazines, for in poetry you get the real feeling of the people.

Speech for Psyche in the Golden Book of Apuleius

All night, and as the wind lieth among
  The cypress trees he lay,
  Nor held me save as air that brusheth by one
Close, and as the petals of flowers in falling
Waver and seem not drawn to earth, so he
Seemed over me to hover light as leaves

And closer me than air,
And music flowing through me seemed to open
Mine eyes upon new colours.
O wind, what wind can match the weight of him !

This poem is from *Personae of Ezra Pound*, and contains real poetry. It is one of my favourites, and I like especially the line : " . . . and as the petals of the flowers in falling . . . ." It has so much depth and has an air of lightness too. I leave Mr. Pound with many regrets, for I could go on writing about him for ever. He has written so much, and his poetry is bound to live in years to come, long after people have forgotten many of his contemporaries. He will be known for his real poetry when his style of Free Verse is forgotten. MAIRI STEWART.

MARCH COPPICE

AWAY to the morning the clearing curved restfully,
wood-petal slim and grounded anemone,
glancing gleam of the celandine ;
arum, dog-mercury, palm over hazel.
All change here for April in green glowing excellence,
change all in the primrose, all gasp and all wonder,
all subtle and fluted green thrust of the spring.

Royal West Kents. E. W. EDMONDS.

THE UNKNOWN COUNTRY

NO one knows my country—neither I
spun by the fluid wind from fertile dust
nor strangers dressed in motley sometime thrust
upon her shores beneath the empty sky,
nor l'habitant in shadow of the priest
nor woodsmen whom the cedar boughs have blest
nor that bright turbulence that is the west
fretting the grey decorum of the east.

How empty are the spaces in her heart !
How lonely her face upon the mountain top !
and lonely the shaggy beasts that stray and crop
and lonely the men that herd then drift apart.
Vast splendour stretches in the gold-washed morn—
this unknown country that is yet unborn.

Vancouver, B.C. DOROTHY TRAIL.

WINTER TREES

NAKED are they, and thin,
Like old men's hands,
Blessing the days, dying,
With new freshness and new sun;
That they will be again displaying
For soon-welcome soft spring desires in bunches
From bold branches.

And, nodding now, regret
(As men regret)
The lost passion and the life
That died with the last bright heat;
The secret love of birds that the leaf
Hid, before the air became cold and the outlines dim,
Before night's dream.

CYRIL HUGHES.

SPRING, 1942

SO once again the sun,
His lone and wintry sleeping done,
With lusty fingers and a gust of mirth
Unveils the virgin earth
And profligate of burning kisses
Wakens with his warm caresses
Life to another birth.

And once again the night
In velvet robe of love's delight
Enmantles all the earth and sings
With happy murmurings.
And love, the seeds of life new sowing
Leaves not a heart with joy unknowing.
But love, alas, has wings.

So here to-night my dear,
Where love-united year by year
Beneath the stillness of the vast unknown
Contented, you my own,
We used to stand, I slowly stand
Grey-hearted with an empty hand
Remembering, alone.

CHRISTMAS HUMPHREYS.

WHITHER?

I.

SEEING men divided
And in sorrow:
Seeing the shadow of Death
More quickly move
Over the waters,
Into the city,
From street to street,
And bereft hearts breaking
Or growing cold,
Holding no seed of light.
Seeing the dust receive
The passive limbs,
The innocent eyes,
I am compelled to cry out!
I am compelled
To search for an answer.
But whither shall I go,
And whose voice shall give answer?

II.

All day I am aware
Of cynical minds
Drawing down
Their painted blinds,
Having no answer.
In lighted rooms,
Town clubs and public houses
Are men in tombs
Sealed against light,
And aimlessly
Day and night
Their thoughts unwind
Among the paper roses
And the dead ends of the mind.

What refuge, what security
This year or any year
Have they who wander blind
From door to door,
Victims of fear,
Tapping the hollow stones,
Aware of nothing more

Than the autumn-touch of decay,
The gigantic question-mark
Encircling the day ?

III.

Life has become
Like a darkened street ;
Lost the flower-like
Falling of light,
The homeward-turning feet ;
Lost, taken from us,
And our griefs
Uncovered by a tide
Which bears our hopes away ;
Yet we have cried
For bread among the stones,
For light to break
Upon our darkness,
Cried for God to wake,
If God is anywhere
And not a dream ;
Cried out for certainties
—Not things that seem
But things that are—
On which to build
An inward peace,
For we have much to bear
Before the Spring returns,
Rebuking our despair.

Winter we understand—
The frost and snow,
The stillness of the land,
The waiting seed,
These things we understand.
But what in man shall flower again
After death,
After long pain ?

IV.

I might have found an answer there . . . or there . . .
Had this and that one not called me back
To an old despair.

Had I not worshipped
Temples of flesh,
Seeking for fresh
Amusement, cheap sights,
And new ways to make money.
Had I not spent my nights
Where lights and vacant laughter
Spin on the dancing floor,
And emptiness comes after.
Had I not turned
Deaf ears to One
Whose fingers are stars,
Whose brow is the sun;
Turned from the vision
Half-seen through the cloud,
And followed the crowd.

But now I seem old . . . old . . .
Like a lurid poster pinned
To the wall of my mind
I see the multitude
With faces lined
By grief and torment,
The oppressed, tear-blind,
Who surge at the Eastern gate
Looking for what new dawn
Beyond the bars of hate,
The smoking barriers;
What saviour and what sign
Beyond the smouldering skies,
The lifted spears,
The darkness and the cries?

O hands stretched up, and hands
That lie so still,
Twisted by torture!
What is man, I cry,
That he must suffer this
Insufferable ill?

V.

The gods we follow fail us now.
The young are cut down like a bough
At blossom-time, the old are slain,

Their blood an ever-lasting stain
Upon the earth. And we who see
A monster set where Love should be,
How shall we answer the silent ones ?
We feed his lust with our own sons—
They bleed to quench his thirsting hate
Before the cry goes up : Too late !
Before his arms of steel embrace
Each heart, and mercy finds no place ;
Before his pagan eyes devour
The earth, and climbing to the tower
Of heaven, he stands where eagles fly,
His iron brow against the sky.

VI.

O you who fear
Death,
Hunger and barren fields,
The house becomes desolate
And the street a wilderness
Of shadows and starlight,
Grotesque walls,
And the mute
Intolerable heaps
Of things once beautiful.

You who fear
Shipwreck of ordered lives,
The breaking up
Of familiar patterns
And fire-side comfort,
Having no roots
In the soil of the spirit,
Your god being self.

O you
Who stride at break of day
In the lonely furrow
Sowing your seed,
What power have you
To bless it with sun and shower,
To draw from it life
Shaped to a leaf
Or flower ?

What power have any of us men
Standing alone in the sad orchards
After the birds have flown,
After the warmth and light
Have left the hills
And winter chills
Our human bones ?

What power
When all is said and done,
The curtain drawn
Against the last rays of the sun ?

VII.

The time has come.
I will set down my empty glass
And rise to my feet.
Night is at the door
Blacker than I have known before,
And exceeding faint and far away
Is the light of day.
I will go out into the night
And march straight on
Down the blood-spattered street.

My plans have failed.
I am not wise, as I thought.
I have done no great evil
Neither any great good,
But I have worn my respectability
Like a coat, cunningly woven—
I tear it apart !

I am glad of my failure,
For now, at last, I know
I am not sufficient unto myself.

FRANCES A. HENEAGE BURKITT.

BROADCAST OF A FIRST PERFORMANCE

LATE, late at night,
I come alone into the empty room—
Here, in a square of light,
Silence and sound ingather from the gloom.

Ten seconds—then,
Released at last, music unheard, unknown,
Will flow to waiting men
Who seek, as I, the peak of sound's pure cone.

How will it break ?
With what lone note, what chord and in what key ?
And oh ! will it awake
The old, the preconceived—or set me free ?

Some faculty,
Not mind nor ear, awaiting the unheard,
Ranges all sounds that be—
The whole gamut—swift as a darting bird,
So to be there.
So to resolve into the nascent note.
Harmony's silken hair
Tightens already round my pulsing throat.

And, as I wait,
The first, soft oboe trembles, sweet and high.
The imperceptible gate
Closes behind me. Is it thus we die ?

SARAH STAFFORD.

MAN ALIVE !

WE'VE scarce yet started wading from the ooze
Of vile primeval slime : it sticks fast round
Our palsied minds and artfully rewoos
Our jungle senses, moving underground.
Yet faint, as though a haze, can be discerned
(If one forgets all stupid crawly ways)
Some nobler feelings waiting to be earned,
Despite so many unexplained delays.
Thank God the yesteryear of life has gone,
Tomorrow yet to be ! And for this hour—
This waiting chance to grasp and feast upon
Each moment filled with throbbing untapped power !
Thus from our clay may break like subtle light
The dawn that brings to labour pure delight !

F. T. BRATTON.

LAMENT FOR A DICTATOR

HE dreamed that he bestrode the sun.
His opulent loins gave forth new worlds
To brighten chaos. He saw them spun
From his own life-stuff:
From thighs that coaxed his sky-high steed
To dark obedience at his need.

Thrusting to that flaming core,
His self was doomed, his golden manhood quenched
With trivial hiss. Too faint the sound that tore
His power away:
Too shrill the voice that urged him then,
"Beget a paradise for men!"

Like toy balloons the bright worlds dropped;
—His hybrid by-blows of the sun!—
The pretty trifles danced a jig, till popped
By Jovian hailstones.
His blackened burnt-out body fell
In No-man's-land 'twixt heaven and hell.

JUANITA PEIRSE.

REPENTANCE

WHERE in this world responds all life to life
Will flower acknowledge flower,
Stately swan the swan,
Calm in the wind's eye, gently without strife

While man, alone, in silence brooding, sows
No bloom of recognition,
Nor with grace of mute farewell
Ever on lone way or water goes.

Yet, sudden on the exile slope
Of toiling, grim ambition,
Caught in the trap of stillness,
Lost, clung to an Everest of hope

Repents, lamenting wildly his distress;
And man, his alien echo,
Him the answer gives
Across the acres of his loneliness.

R.A.F., Manchester. REGINALD AKHURST.

THE OLD WOMAN REMEMBERS

BACK to a tiny room at close of day
I creep on withered feet,
And close by the murmuring firelight
I and my memories meet;
For though my back to a hoop is bowed,
Yet the gold hair tumbled down it once
As the sunset down a cloud.

Though my brain is shrunk to a walnut,
And my face to a fallen leaf,
Though my hand is frail as a thin dead twig,
And my breast as dry as grief,
And though I am broken with toil and years,
Yet the starlight sprang from my blue eye once
As now my tears.

JOSEPH GERARD O'CONOR.

BAD NEWS

THE broadcast evening news was bad,
And then a voice went on to add
Stories of tortures that befell
Our conquered fellow men, the hell
Let loose of terror, lust and hate,
Too terrible to contemplate—
And children even were a prey
Taken to live the Nazi way.
I stepped into the garden where
Breathing the soothing summer air
I felt a flash of strange surprise
To see the sunny azure skies,
To hear the thrushes song ring out
And see the butterflies about
The roses clustered on the wall.
I thought to find a curse on all
These lovely things—they could not be
In such a world of misery.
But Heaven be praised, in spite of wrong
We still can hear the thrushes song,
And still upon a summer night
Breathe the soft air with keen delight.

ELIZABETH BARRETT.

LEST SHE SHOULD WAKE

LIE green upon her gentle breast, O Spring,
And breath of azure April once again;
Perchance her quiet heart, remembering,
Will quicken to your rapturous refrain.
O call across the whispering winds of dawn,
The silver-vestured naiads of the rain,
Ere the swift gleaner of the year has drawn
Earth's elixir of ecstacy and pain.

Lie green upon her gentle breast, O Spring,
And sigh of sylvan summer soon to be;
Of chaliced skies where larks are carolling,
And thrushes flute their memoried melody.
Blend with her dreams the murmur of the sea,
Where the long ivory-crested billows break,—
For Pan is passing with his pageantry,
Piping his elfin songs—lest she should wake.

IRENE CHAPMAN BENSON.

BLACKOUT

THE Neon signs in Piccadilly flash'd
But yesterday, it seems, their myriad eyes.
Now darkness has descended; yet the town,
Wrap't in night's mantle not unlov'ly lies,
Like some pale beauty who in widow's weeds
Looks but the fairer for her sombre guise.

W. S. BARNARD.

SNOW RHAPSODY

WHEN circling gulls, with plaintive cry,
Against the dark snow-whirling sky,
White-winged, come swooping to and fro
Amid the wild wind driven snow;
And little hungry singing birds
Go seeking, like my soul for words,
By sheltered hedgerows wood and lawn,
To greet the white snow-drifting dawn;
Then all my thoughts, like birds in flight,
Go riding, gliding into light,
Wind-buffeted and swept with snow,
To gather glory as they go.

VIOLA MEAKIN.

THE NEVER-NEVER!

CAPTURE me moonbeam, lock tight in gold ring
Proudly I'll wear it ever :
Pull me gay star from night sky for my hair,
And I'll part with it never.

Oh! the out of reach . . the just-too-out-of-reach,
For which I've hourly striven :
For gold fruit perched on top-most bough,
Body and soul were riven.

Though still I yearn for far off things . . .
(Those things beyond all getting)
I cull the near-home things with pride,
And find there's slight regretting.

KAY TOOVEY.

WORDS

I HAVE loved words all my days
And now am sick,
Sick of the unexpressed
And the skilful trick.

The old and simple words
That touched a spring,
Dulled by misuse and use
No longer sing.

I would like to close my eyes
And shut my ears,
Groping my way within
In future years.
To another world of words,
New-minted gold,
Coined as primeval man
Took them of old.

When all was fresh and young
In the rapture of birth,
Singing, the words flew down
From heaven to earth.

D. R. W. CARR.

VARIATIONS ON A THEME

PEACE

FOR peace I sought behind the wind's deep roar
Sunk to the tender whisper of a prayer,
Running long fingers through the meadows' hair.
I sought along a lone forgotten shore
Where the mad tumult of the sobbing waves
Changed, in shy tiny pools, to tinkling sounds.
I wandered in the hush of holy grounds
Beneath the sad old yew-trees, where the graves
Chanted in monotone their dirge of death.
And where, in solitude, remote and high,
The mountains reached to kiss the blushing sky.
Nor once I felt her warm caressing breath.
But one day she will beckon, soft and low ;
And leaving all my baggage I shall go.

OLD MRS. SOAME

Peace lodges down our street at number forty-seven.
She is quite suited there with Mrs. Soame
in that stolen patch of heaven
she is pleased to call her home.
In the long evenings when the work is done,
old Mrs. Soame is glad to have her lodger.
They sit together
content to tat or knit,
or listen to the wireless,
or merely sit.
They gossip of old days gone by.
Sometimes they have a shame-faced cry
at special times when birthdays come around.
Of Jim, her air-force son, lost out at sea—
the body never found.
Of Mr. Soame, long resting underground.
Of Bob, who never had a chance
to know the deeper joys of life, he died so young :
Buried in France.
As the fire winks its way to sleep
in the deep old-fashioned grate ;
and on the gleaming-dull black-leaded hob,
the kettle-lid curtsies a good-night bob :
When the cat stretches and yawns :

Old Mrs. Soame mentions that it is late,
smiles at her lodger with a nodding head
and off they go to bed.
Peace lodges down our street at number forty-seven—
Quite happy in that moiety of heaven.

IN MEMORIAM

Air-gunner Bull,
Reported missing—
Later brought home by the sea.

Why, O sea, so passionless and grey.
Why mock the maker with the shattered shell ?
When the soul of it,
The warm and living heart,
Has risen from your torpid dead embrace—
High, high above the screaming of the gulls
That marked the sudden passing of its flight.

The gulls are silent.
The following echo fades
And earthly noises cease.

The solemn hush of everlasting peace.

JOHN HADEN.

DEATH IN SLEEP

SINCE death must come to each howe'er he try,
And no man may his part in it refuse,
This is the way that I could wish to die
If ever it were given me to choose ;
To die asleep, and sleeping, in a dream
Of setting sail upon some tranquil night
Beneath a field of powdered stars whose gleam
Sprinkles the sea with quivering points of light,
With faces of old friends upon the quay
To wish me fortune in my unknown quest,
Waving farewell to me ; but cheerily,
As though assured that that which is, is best ;
And finding death, to find in death romance,
Seeking some far-off port of happy chance.

J. SACKVILLE MARTIN.

THE RELATION OF MUSIC TO POETRY

THE association of poetry with music has been argued about and illustrated lately here and at Poetry Society meetings. But it is no new thing. From the dim swamp, the jungle, the fire-illuminated cave where leaping figures enliven the long Nordic night with song and dance—it comes. First as the beating of hands and feet, then the skin drum, later to evolve from mere stressed rhythm to recognized and traditional songs and airs—the drum has changed to strings and the singer is tamed. Finally, comes the cleavage. No longer are words and music one, but separate—poetry becomes an art in its own right. Now, independent of music, the subtle melodies of rhyme and undercurrents of vowel-play and assonance are more apparent. The poet, even as the musician, may weave his tunes and harmonies so that they equal, if not excel, musical compositions.

Harps, bells, organs and birds, seem to sound melodiously in the inner ear. The gold and silver voice of Shelley, the solemn rolling of Milton's mighty notes, Shakespeare—who might be termed the Beethoven of poetry—with his matchless gift of song.

Most of the great poets have sung, although some, allowing the desire for music in their work to eclipse the work itself, degenerated into mere tunefulness. Swinburne, when obsessed by 'soft sweet sound' produces a deadeningly narcotic effect on the reader: like Chopin, he should be taken only in small doses.

The measured regularity of some of Tennyson's work, has, after a while, a very 'hymns ancient and modern' flavour, the extreme smoothness tending to a flat monotony which becomes wearisome. The love of tinkling rhyme and rippling verses was perhaps the worst fault of the Victorian poets. Almost regardless of theme the poem was forced into a pleasing pattern, which, while tickling the ear, offended rankly against the sense of fitness.

> "Home they brought her warrior dead
> She nor swooned nor uttered cry;
> All her maidens, watching said,
> She must weep or she will die."

In Tennyson's "The Princess," these lines have a gay lilt strangely contrasting to their meaning.

The setting of poems to music sometimes has the same effect. Personally, I dislike hearing "To a Nightingale" rendered as a song, the words being often unintelligible and the tune mournful, with the thrilling note of immortality entirely absent. Shakespeare's songs, being written to be sung and containing many repetitional lines, seem to gain immensely when heard in conjunction with voice and music as do the lyrics of Gay and Herrick. It appears that simplicity and a certain naif freshness are

the qualities to be sought for in poem-songs, otherwise any intricacies or difficult word-play will be lost or obscured by the superimposed tune.

Almost every poet feels the close bond between poetry and music, for poetry is the music of the inner ear, heard with the outward sense and falling on that part of the mind where all he finer experiences are recorded. Many lovely poems have been written in praise of music. Shelley's "I pant for the music which is divine," the lines from the "Merchant of Venice," which begin, "How sweet the moonlight sleeps upon the bank," and are probably the most beautiful in the English language which speaks in praise of music. There are many more, among them Pope's "Music the fiercest grief can charm," from the "Ode On St. Cecilia's Day." Wilfrid Owen in "Music," speaks of its power and also of the music of love,

> I have been urged by earnest violins
> And drunk their mellow sorrows to the slake
> Of all my sorrows and my thirsting sins.
> My heart has beaten for a brave drum's sake.
> Huge chords have wrought me mighty : I have hurled
> Thuds of God's thunder. And with old winds pondered
> Over the curse of this chaotic world,
> With low lost winds that maundered as they wandered.
>
> I have been gay with trivial fifes that laugh ;
> And songs more sweet than possible things are sweet ;
> And gongs, and oboes. Yet I guessed not half
> Life's sympathy till I had made hearts beat,
> And touched Love's body into trembling cries,
> And blown my love's lips into laughs and sighs.

If poetry reflects the moods and thoughts of the age in which it is written, then most decidedly does the music or lack of it in these poems. All the spacious splendour, the new vitality that came into being at the noontide of the renaissance, rings out triumphantly in the poetry of the Elizabetheans.

With Pope, the song has lost its freshness, a certain ornateness, not to say stiffness, becomes evident, which in turn gives way to the rustic horn of Grey, and later, Cowper. Wordsworth, Coleridge, and then a burst of song which surpasses in brilliance anything that has been heard before. Shelley, Keats and Byron, gave to Georgian England, music of a new and lovely quality, music that was essentially her own, expressing the freshly awakened inclination towards Greek mythology, while retaining a truly English freedom of technique.

With Victoria, the song becomes somewhat sentimental : tunefulness and a love of bathos marred much fine work. Gerard Manley Hopkins, the first of the moderns, was writing those poems of originality and strange vigour which were not to be published until after his death.

Tennyson, Swinburne, and the Brownings, piano, pipes, and 'cello, made music for an audience who were becoming increasingly poetry conscious. Of the pre-war poets, varied and distinctive, were—and in many cases, still are—the voices raised, Yeats, Masefield, De la Mare, and later, Wilfred Owen, Robert Graves, Edmund Blunden; the Sitwells' glass-spinet music; Walter de la Mare for whom the "horns of elfland" surely blow, and W. B. Yeates, being perhaps those in whom the stream of song flows most strongly.

In the later poets, music is hard to find, T. S. Eliot could not be called a musical poet in spite of his great gifts. Ezra Pound—in view of this so-called poet's recent activities 'ersatz' would seem a more suitable first name—and all those in whom mental gymnastics and contortions are needed in order to appreciate their work, have little to offer.

In some poetry has appeared a curious interpretation of the discordance of modern times, Louis Macneice's "Bagpipe Music," which suggests, not the convential tartan piper who might entertain the guests at a Victorian Balmoral, but a skirling, decadent modern satire, is but one. "Foxtrot From a Play," by W. H. Auden, is another, alsc his poem which begins "I have a handsome profile." Indeed, much of Auden's poetry has definitely Limerick-like metre.

In the work of the younger poets is to be found many qualities, originality of theme and technique, a close grip on reality—but not music. Perhaps, if anything, it is a little despised, or is it that in these times of violence and discord, music is driven from the minds of poets, and that with the coming of the long looked for peace we shall hear once more what Keats called "Strange thunders from the potency of song"?

ELLODE COLLINS.

ROOKS AT EVENING

UP from the full-leaved elms they reeled,
A single impulsed entity
That as one body soared and wheeled
On tattered pinions circling free,
Scribed on the June ensilvered light,
Chinese gyrations left to right,
Involved calligraphy of flight.
With happy hieroglyphs that told
In ecstacy of movement there,
My burdened spirit might unfold
To join them in the upper air.

GLADYS HUNKIN.

T. S. ELIOT AND THE LAY READER: III

SOMEONE, somewhere speaks of T. S. Eliot.—"Let me think. He wrote *The Waste Land,* didn't he ?" A poet's most famous work is not always his best poetry, but has frequently won its status by the scope of its appeal. In this case Eliot chose as his object the phallic law of fertility—Death—Resurrection. The parallels of modern life to old tradition, presented him with a structural analogy, based on the whole fibre of civilization. *The Waste Land* is perpetuate in subject, but in derivative style limited by the barren period in which Eliot lived to record it. His camera has faithfully detailed a decade of civilization absorbed in destruction. Such an age has bare earth, stones, pestilence and famine to offer ; and one is reminded of the steward who buried his one talent rather than that his master might gain. So we should read this poem as a sincere and grave indictment of world achievement in this our 20th century.

Writing personally, I feel the loss of a great play. *The Waste Land* is so nearly a play in characterization, setting and plot, that it need not have been in some passages and scenes a really ugly poem. I said "some" passages ! Scenes which are not happy in the liquid context of a poem would in a play, be noted by the eye and not by the ear. That malt-coloured jewel, the carbuncle ; combinations and false teeth ! Apart from their association, labials are not musical, they bluster badly. Their creative power is belligerent and assertive, giving no sense of that seductive quality encompassed through harmony. These words undoubtedly fulfilled a purpose ; in their context they are clever as an offset, they did their worst, their very worst ! But are they majestic, lovely, memorable ?

On the title page of *The Waste Land* we read, "For I saw with my own eyes a celebrated Sibyl at Cumae bending over her bowl, and when her Acolytes said, "What do you wish O Sibyl ?" She replied, "I wish to die." (Apollo had given her hundreds of years to live without the gift of perpetual youth.)

This quotation is followed up immediately in the first four lines of the opening poem ; memory is revived ; desire may not sleep ; the Sibyl may not die ! The sun breaks through and the soft fertilizing spring rain drops to release the dormant life-urge. Release to what end ? Fear !

"And I was frightened," he said, "Marie, Marie, hold on tight."

Eliot invites us to look beneath the surface values, to "come in under the shadow of this red rock," because its shadow is one of eternity. "I will show you something different from either your shadow at morning, striding behind you, or your shadow at evening rising to meet you ; I will show you fear in a handful of dust." This last line should be particularly noted as it is one of Eliot's most dramatic lines. He is not speaking of the fear of death, but the fear of the embryonic life contained in a handful of dust. What will it create ? We do not know, but its movement is suggested by the Hyacinths, Spring's expression of renewed life.

These forty-two opening lines are very close to prose. Eliot has restricted them to the scratched surface of a hibernating world—reluctant, recalcitrant, morose. The metre lies more like a blanket of morning mist, clinging tenuously over marsh and

moor and ends with the exquisite softness of " 'Oed' und leer das Meer." (The sea is barren and empty.)

Madame Sosostris then cuts right across the poem in a light society vein, though bleakness still prevails, indirectly stated by "a bad cold." She is a link with the second and fourth poems.

Are these seventeen lines worth more than a heavy brush stroke across a stormy landscape ?

One line dedicated to the packed lore contained in the 5th and 10th Tarots ! Two cards, which as the reference to this article show, reveal the essence of Egyptian mythology ! Further, The Hanged Man, associated with the God of Vulcan, is by inference used out of context since it has no connexion with hanging. In fact there seems to be evidence of a blunder in the history of this card. In some packs the Hanged Man is shown upright with a foot cautiously advanced and the Latin title "pede suspenso." It is presumed that an ignorant card-marker drew the figure suspended by his foot as "Le Pendu."

Accepting the premiss that Eliot has deliberately slashed his entire background of mythology, there still remains one line of significant interpretive value :
"I see crowds of people, walking round in a ring." Well done, Madame Sosostris ! Your empty head has one thing to give us of supreme value. It is here that Eliot finds comfort in Browning's British Warm :

> "What had I on earth to do
> With the slothful, with the mawkish, the
> unmanly ?
> Like the aimless, helpless, hopeless, did I drivel
> —Being—who ?"

This is the crucial judgment, the line in capitals that leads to the beginning of the play. Eliot has staged his puppets and grafted their background and now shoulder to shoulder with Leoncavallo he opens his prelude with the low, slow notes of lament, "Unreal City !"

Here is the artist's flick of the whip, the curb, the directed purpose. Our city, America's city, Every nation's city, unreal ! aimless ! hopeless !

Stetson, the name for a million others who have buried their true selves, afraid that something sincere (the dog) might bring it to light ; might expose the little artificialities coating the fear of reality. The dramatic power is sustained to the final line, "mon semblable, mon frère !" and in the background is the unmistakable echo of "Vesti la guibba." On with the motley !

I am indebted to Mr. H. T. Morley for showing me a collection of some hundreds of cards, of every nation and age.

II

To conserve time for those reading these articles for examination work, it may be helpful to give short references to the more obscure origins from which Mr. Eliot drew for his work on *The Waste Land*.

Grail : the cycle of Grail stories embody two distinct legends—(1) the quest of

Percival for certain talismans, probably based on Pagan mythology; (2) the Arthurian legend of Round Table.

Ritual to Romance (extracts only) Jessie Weston. "There is a general consensus of evidence to the effect that the main object of the 'Quest' is the restoration to health and vigour of a king suffering from infirmity caused by wounds, sickness, or old age. Which infirmity for some reason reacts disastrously upon his kingdom, either depriving it of vegetation or exposing it to the ravages of war. In three cases the misfortunes and 'wasting of the land' are the RESULT OF WAR. Adonis ritual (700 B.C.): aimed to avert temporary suspension of all reproductive energies of nature. In majority of the Adonis cults the main fact emerges, that the 'Spirit of Vegetation' is considered as dead and the object of ceremonies is to restore life. *Conclusions:* from the Fisher King, elements form grail legend. Setting; nature of tasks; symbols and significance present parallels of belief in countries widely separate, *i.e.*, British Isles, Russia, Central Africa. *Explanation:* theory of rituals presumed to give life-giving potency."

Mysterium und mimus im Rig Veda (Von Schroeder): the task of the Grail is a heritage from the achievements of the prehistoric heroes of the Aryan race: the main motives to encourage and ensure the fertility of the earth: established in the roots of folk-customs and deeper stratum of folk-tradition."

Rig Veda. Commonly known as the Thousand and One Hymns, include Grail stories.

The Golden Bough (extracts), Sir James Frazer, F.R.S., etc.; "Osiris, the Egyptian God, in one of his aspects is the legendry God of Corn. The story that his mangled remains were scattered up and down the land, buried in different places, may be a mythical way of expressing either the sowing or the winnowing of the grain. He is also connected with Isis (his sister and wife) in the rising of the Nile waters. In the month of Khoiak the priests used to bury effigies of Osiris, made of mixed earth and corn. The corn-god produced the corn from himself; he gave his own body to feed the people; he died that they might live. The ceremony was in fact a charm to ensure the growth of the corn by sympathetic magic. Burial in sowing; resurrection in the future crops. Similarity of worship and myths of Osiris with Adonis, Attis, Dionysus and Demeter. Phenomena is annual growth and decay of vegetation.

The Tarot of the Bohemians (extracts only), Papus. Translated A. P. Morton. "The Gypsy pack of cards is a great book of tradition under the name of 'Tarot' which has formed the basis of the synthetic teachings of all the ancient nations. Although it is an amusement, it is also the key to obscure tradition. Symbolism of the Tarot equals a symbol, a number, an idea. Kabbalah equals Trinity. The sacred word Yod-He-Vau-He. The Being who Is, who WAS, and who WILL BE. YOD, The active principle, pre-eminent, CREATOR; HE, the passive principle, pre-eminent, RECEIVER; VAU, the medium letter, link which unites, TRANSFORMER; HE, the passage from one world to another, TRANSITION."

5th Tarot. (Eliot's note—The man with three staves.) "An Egyptian relic having relation to the triple Phallus which represents the recovery of Osiris. It corresponds to Idea of Life, of animation." H. T. Morley.

10th Tarot. The wheel represents the rise and fall of fortune. In mythology the emblem which is one of the oldest, represents Osiris, the great Egyptian divinity, judging the souls of the dead. The wheel is a satire in fortune. H. T. Morley.

12th Tarot. The Hanged Man! Hieroglyphically the "lamed" designates the arm and therefore it is connected with anything that stretches, raises or unfolds like the arm. It has become the sign of expansion, the image of the power derived from elevation. The card expresses charity, courage, knowledge and prudence, as well as wisdom and fidelity. H. T. Morley. E. M. STEPHENSON.

DYNAMICS OF AMERICAN POETRY: XCIV

The arrival of *The Lips Keep Moving,* by H. P. Stoddard (Kaleidograph Press, Texas) is a happy event. As poet and critic, Mr. Stoddard is well known and highly regarded. He is a life-long resident of Washington, D.C.

In answer to my request to say something concerning poetry, Mr. Stoddard sent me the following, the result of a controversy started in the columns of the *Washington Star:*

> "Poetry is a distillation. It is the wine of the spirit. Technique is merely a shell—the cask into which the wine is poured. Putting water into the cask cannot make Chateau D'Or Champagne; detailed perfection of technique alone cannot create poetry.
>
> Poetry is fluid, flexible, adaptable, varied and tinged with the character and personality of the author. Technique is inflexible, mechanical, wholly impersonal and extremely limited in its individual adaptibility. It is reasonable to assume that poetry existed long before there was technique, as we now understand it. Technique grew from poetry: Poetry could not possibly have sprung from technique."

Mr. Stoddard's poem "Inviolate," which has been read a number of times over the radio and fitting poignantly this desperate moment, we give:

Thousands have died in countless battles fought,
And yet no tyrant ever had the power
To subjugate or conquer human thought,
Or change the fragrance of a wayside flower.

Though despots may, with diabolic art,
Enslave a land, yet never can they take
The precious things within the yearning heart—
The things which brutal force can never break.

Although men gaze upon a trampled creed;
Although their last white sepulchres be burned;
Although the hearts of stricken mothers bleed;
Though prayers be mocked and holy pledges spurned;
Though men may see the hard, relentless heel
Of cruel hordes upon their countryside;
Though broken bodies on the earth may kneel,
The soul remains erect and undefied.

For no decree has ever yet been signed
That can abolish dreamers or their dreams;
Unvanquished is the province of the mind—
Safe from the despot and his ruthless schemes.

We find that Mr. Stoddard's admirers speak of his background of scholarship and wide range of reading.

This reviewer was called upon recently to define the difference between the beauty of music and the beauty of poetry, and answered the challenge this way: Music is greater than poetry because it is freer and it leaves the mind free to make its own pictures and draw its own conclusions, whereas in poetry the words are the sign-posts and the mind or heart is thus directed and controlled.

Let us read this poet's celebration of Brahms:

I

Your music neither denies
Nor affirms.
It voices no reproof;
Gives utterance to no prejudice;
Subscribes to no sovereign creed.
It is the soul of beauty,
Shorn of the encumbrance of flesh;
The divine fire of poetry,
Without the intermediary
Symbolism of words;
The celestial entity of art,
Separable from the impedimenta
Of canvas and frame.

II

These faltering phrases
Must fall far short
Of tribute to genius.
Let them, then,
Serve as recognition
Of your prevision
Of music as Truth Absolute!

The author of *Philosopher What Word* (Loker Raley), Juliet Alves, writes me with enthusiasm about poetry:

"You ask what part I think poetry plays in life to-day? It seems to me it plays an important part to those minds poetically inclined, those persons in whom emotion is a stirring force. In poetic forms we are permitted to find satisfying strength to help us with the every day problems. I for one would loathe a world without poetry in it."

The opening poem in this collection gives us twenty-two stanzas and gives the title to the volume. The twenty-second, the last stanzas, we give:

. . What now, oh you wise men,
You philosophers of creation:
You grasped the pattern then,
Held the wisdom of the ages, scorned the newer thread!
Can you rewrite our salvation?
Remember, man's heart is not dead.

We will pause to read a short and charming expression entitled "Of Richer Fields."

So rest the fields in quiet tones,
With clods scattered
Where sun-dried grasses like amber threads
Mat about the cornstalks' broken maze of tan;
A mist blends tarnished gold with blue
Of hazy summertime.
These fields shall yet become as one
With silent snows,
Shall feel the rains run deeper with spring,
And know a glad young covering . . .

Beyond the comments in praise by accredited judges, we, any of us who read *Galanty Show*, by Josiah Titzell (Doubleday, Doran), would dare to say, nay more, hurry to say, read Mr. Titzell's poetry. I wish I knew more about this writer, what lead to this fruition.

It would seem this poet has found Love all and not all, who has not? Let us read "You":

> I could be there, already beyond the edge,
> and think of you, always with love of you,
> and be as suddenly back as I had gone.
> This thing is true, true.
> For you are wind and wave, their sweep and lift;
> out of the drowning depths your magnet smile
> brings strength and peace and gentleness,
> and joy the while.

and "First Frost":

> This is a desolate country, bone-dry and white,
> this is a funeral land, as lonely as the night.
> Last week it was flowered, its moon was rich and round,
> yesterday the harvest spread honey on the ground.
> But now it is a cold land without your warming touch;
> the weather vane's been blown away, the rabbit's left his hutch,
> the stable door is banging, the cattle's bars are down,
> and the farmer's sworn, and crossed himself, and driven off to town.
> And where are you, my doxie, lavishing your kisses
> to keep a world from being as cold and dead as this is?

Quoting a few lines from "Seven Postscripts to Andromeda":

> It is only apart that we shall surely discover
> the sweetness of being the loved, the lover.
>
> A fragile thing is love;
> grasp it too surely
> it will crumble in your hands as dust,
> finger it lightly
> it will strike the ground;
> yet touch it you must.
>
> Cold is insidious, as hate
> which constant love cannot abate,
> as sharp, as stubborn and as drear.
> The fire is low; move closer dear . . . .
>
> Love's hour-glass needs frequent turning.
> Love is short and life is long.
> Winding up the music box
> turns dwindling discord into song.
>
> If hate is love and love is hate,
> then truth, my love, I cannot wait
> till all is changed and I am done
> with love and with the other one.

With a sure mu ical sense Mr. Titzell writes of Bach :

First, a bare tree
sketch against the dawn,
a chaste and gentle line
superbly drawn ;
a growth of leaves,
an outward fling of boughs,
a landscape fully seen,
birds, sheep and cows ;
harvest of gold,
the setting Autumn sun,
leaves slipping from the trees
one by one ;
against the night
we can again but see
the slender, skyward line,
the wind-swept tree.

Margaret E. Bruner is no stranger to the readers of THE POETRY REVIEW. This *Be Slow to Falter* (Kaleidograph Press, Dallas, Texas), her fifth book of poetry, has received very favourable press comments. Mrs. Bruner is a native of Indiana, living in New Castle, and her poetry has become known the world over through wide publications of her poems. In response to my request that this poet write a word directly to THE POETRY REVIEW, on poetry, she sends the following :

> As the word poet means "maker," it is the poet's task now, more than ever before, to create, or make beauty that will endure. It is difficult when almost the whole universe is engulfed in war, for the poet to rise above disillusionment, but this, I think, is his specific task—to cling to an ideal built on the principles of peace and harmony. It is his mission to create a sort of tower of strength for a troubled world ; he must be strong—must be able to emerge with faith, from the slough of despondency and doubt, and keep before his vision, a realm where someday peace will eventually reign.

It is a common experience that a fragrance of a flower or a theme of music recalls vividly to the point of reality—some happening—some face—of long ago. Mrs. Bruner pictures this in "Strange Loneliness" :

Sometimes the measures of a song once known
In dim forgotten days will stab the heart,
A tenderness one thinks he has outgrown
Comes surging back and makes the quick tears start.

All in a throng perhaps a voice is heard
Like one we knew—then fades and dies away ;
And memories that slumbered long are stirred—
The mind goes backward to a distant day.

It is as if a cloud has veiled the sight,
With power both to sadden and to bless,
That brings us sorrow blended with delight,
And leaves a strange and haunting loneliness.

The human interest in these poems of Mrs. Bruner have carried them into many anthologies.

ALICE HUNT BARTLETT.

A ROYAL ACADEMY OF POETRY

In his letter in your July issue, Mr. Nicholas Moore states that I favour an R.A.P. the members of which need not be in the first rank. Far from it. I advocated, in fact, that in the first stages it would be advisable to proceed cautiously in the election of members and not necessarily elect the full complement immediately. Whilst there might quite possibly be one or two important poets who would refuse the honour of election to this assembly, I doubt whether there would be more than, literally, one or two—possibly none. I agree with Mr. Moore when he says that it would hardly be possible to point to forty living poets of the first class in this country. In his own list he boldly puts forward thirty-one names; an interesting list but surely not all in the very first rank. For my part I should not care to name more than ten, say—John Masefield, T. S. Eliot, Alfred Noyes, Laurence Binyon, T. Sturge Moore, Walter de la Mare, Herbert Palmer, Edmund Blunden, W. J. Turner, and Stephen Spender. A conservative and unimaginative selection will be the verdict of Mr. Moore and many others, no doubt, but, nevertheless, some such nucleus would, I believe, form a solid foundation on which to build once more the proud edifice of English poetry. After that, by all means let us have all the fun of the fair in the guise of A.R.A.P.s, thirty or forty of them, maybe, and give them their head—and the devil take the humbugs and the hedge-priests of the craft.

Some dismay has been expressed at this "morbid desire" for a R.A.P. and the alleged stifling effect it would have on current poetry. But it is nothing to the dismay and bewilderment felt by that poor fish, the man-in-the-street, when he attempts to derive for himself from much current poetry some of the inspiration and pleasure which he has been led to believe is contained therein. (I am sorry, Mr. A. H. Duff, if I appear to labour this aspect of the matter but, as a man-in-the-street myself, I consider it of no little importance).

In arriving at a decision as to whether or not there is a case for the establishment of a R.A.P. the following questions might profitably be considered: (1) Can it be reasonably maintained that, to-day, all is well with English poetry and that it is providing the colour and inspiration which it has provided in the past 400 years and which are looked for not only by the people of this country but the whole world? (2) Do unknown poets of talent get a "break" and a reasonably fair chance to be judged on their merits, or is it a fact that unless they join up with, and are accepted by, one of the cliques, or unless they have a title, or unless they are prepared to pay cash for the privilege of seeing themselves in print, the chances of making any real headway, or receiving any worth-while encouragement—with one or two honourable exceptions such as THE POETRY REVIEW—are very slight? (3) In the 174 years of its existence has the Royal Academy of Arts justified itself and have its influence and activities from both the artist's and the public's viewpoint been, broadly speaking, good and helpful, or bad and mischievous? At its inception were there apparently insuperable difficulties to be overcome, or was its course a smooth one?

Robert Nathan, in the *New York Times Book Review*, has made the following significant comment: "It is not the constant defeat in battle which troubles us most for England; it is the heart of English poetry, grown small and arid, which gives no light against the dark." To-day, as rarely before, there is a job of work for our poets to do and, rightly or wrongly, I believe that a R.A.P. could help substantially in clearing away much of the bindweed which is choking the life out of English poetry and thereby leaving "wisdom at one entrance quite shut out."

I endorse the suggestion of Mr. Christmas Humphreys that a small committee be set up which, working principally by correspondence and perhaps by means of a

carefully drawn-up questionnaire, could ascertain the opinion of our leading poets and critics on this project and generally investigate the matter, reporting its findings in due course in THE POETRY REVIEW.

Ambleside, August 14th. P. E. LEAVER.

May I crave the courtesy of a little more space for a further statement of my support of Mr. P. E. Leaver's magnificently prospected scheme of a Royal Academy of Poetry.

I would vision that the greatest task this body could perform would be the giving of recognition and acknowledgment to poets of merit, whose works for many reasons could not at the present time see publication. I am not of that happy optimism which believes that merit alone must come to the front in any branch of literature. In play-writing, in novel and essay composition, there are many chances that works of great talent, nay, even of genius, may rot unknown in the lonely attics in which their authors conceived and bore them. A play producer or book publisher must of course not take risks or his shareholders or backers will want to know the reason why. Even more uphill is the long sisyphean task of him who would woo the muses for his avocation. I would suggest that the R.A.P. should, for a small fee, read and consider any works admitted, whether dogseared by perusal, or stiff and starched by the cold hand of neglect. For all great works it would accord a certificate of merit, and there could be three degrees of excellence, for which Academy certificates might be obtained. The poet therefore (notwithstanding that his works cannot be published by editors or others) will have something to show that he is a person of a certain literary distinction, of a fine value, and that his life-work has not been in vain. Also, the Academy might keep a list of poets whose works they could publish when the general taste for poetry had been developed. At least six adjudicators must decide unitedly on a just verdict—and here, I should like to say how greatly I agree with your correspondent, Ellode Collins, that there should be two independent boards for "Traditional" and "Modern" poetry, respectively. This is only reasonable. These are two different forms of art, and almost of another language, the one from the other. A false standpoint of adjudication would be set up if they came under one heading.

I would venture to propose *three* sections of separate adjudication boards, formed and selected annually for the occasion, viz. :—No. 1 for Formed Verse ; No. 2 for Free Verse ; No. 3 for Poetic Impressions. I prefer these designations to "Traditional" and "modern." It would be quite in order that members of the second category adjudication board (Free Verse) should be drawn discreetly from the other two, as Free Verse divides the two extremes in poetry.

I am of the decided opinion that *one book only* should be published annually, divided as stated into three sections. Such a division is a plea that I have frequently put before verse-editors for their periodicals, but at present, without results. I am convinced, however, that in this case such division is necessary, for otherwise, the compilation will become an antithetical process of unsympathetic and jarring sounds. Of course both sexes will be eligible for all positions in the R.A.P. It is to be hoped that Mr. Leaver's fine foreshadowing will one day become a *fait accompli*.

Clifford, Hereford, August 22nd, 1942. ARTHUR ROW.

[*If the above advocated activities are desirable could they not be discharged by the present Poetry Society : is a more august Academy necessary* ?—ED.]

THE TWO ALANS

May I congratulate you once again on your July-August number which is full of good things as usual. That I should venture, as I indend to do, to cavil a little at two

of your choices is, I suppose, ungracious, but these poems so different in character, written by Mr. Alan Scott and Mr. Alan Rook respectively, do rather offend my uncritical taste.

Mr. Scott's verses are an example of the work of a modern coterie which might be very aptly be called the "Guts and Blood" School. The author graduates therein with honours for this poem. He has not only used his ration of guts and blood but has added a garnish of gangrene, followed by retching, rupture and drains—no doubt a perfectly natural sequence of event. This excursion into the poetic realm is called "God moves in a mysterious Way." He does indeed, and never more so than when He inspired Mr. Scott so beautifully.

But what am I to say of Mr. Alan Rook's "Village at War." He is obviously adherent to a different school, for while his subject also is the effect of war he is more concerned with broken stones than broken bones, and contrasts the visceral violence of the other Alan with an almost ascetic forbearance, as though so stricken with architectural grief as to be capable only of a few muttered phrases, not all of which are intelligible, and with not one single drop of blood to lay the dust.

Yet, there are two arresting lines in this poem. These are the two reading—"Along the banks of the pavement." So far as I am concerned my arrest has been uninterrupted since I first read them, and I shall not escape their thrall until someone divulges their meaning to me.

But seriously, sir, why do some writers commit such solecisms? This is my language as well as theirs, and I resent its abuse as I would an insult to someone I love. To use words unmeaningly or obscurely to adult readers is as irritating as to be addressed in baby language.

Poets must be the servants of their medium, more concerned with the exact, accepted usage of words than other men. Word music and rhythm are and must remain secondary to sense, otherwise, this art must become a mere offence to the majority of mankind. Indeed, to arrogate to oneself the right to tamper with language is an impertinence.

These verses I submit are not poetry at all. The economy of words is matched by an equal economy of the effort necessary to produce a poem. I do not deny that a picture is conveyed if one has imagination, but what of the millions who are deficient in this quality. Have not poets a duty to be understood of the multitude, so that the many may be apprised of beauty and benefited thereby.

Twickenham, August 15th. H. W. Harding.

THE SOURCE OF KUBLA KHAN

Writing of Coleridge's poem "Kubla Khan," Professor John Livingston Lowes, of Harvard University, states in his book *The Road to Xanadu*, page 343, it "is a thing of unique and imperishable beauty . . ."

Coleridge himself has told enough to raise a lot of questions which he has left unanswered, and which, from then till now, have piqued legitimate curiosity," and, on page 361,

> "What gave Coleridge the two vivid figures—the damsel with a dulcimer and the youth with flashing eyes and floating hair—"?

I had supplied the answer to the above question, and thereby had satisfied a large part of the "legitimate curiosity," in 1921, by my discovery that the poem had reference to Aloadine, "The Old Man of the Mountain." This discovery I submitted to the Bodleian Librarian, the late Sir Arthur Cowley, in August, 1921, who passed it on to one of his experts in English literature, and I was told later I had made good my case.

Having thus securely established (as I then thought) my claim to the discovery, I had no longer any idea of secrecy, and in view of the intense interest of the matter, as outlined above by Professor Lowes, it would be strange if Sir Arthur did not mention it to whomsoever he knew was an admirer of Coleridge. Thus, it seems we may conclude that my discovery was known to Coleridge enthusiasts, both in England and America, in September, 1921, for, that month, Sir Arthur was in the United States.

On March 9th, 1922, *The Times Literary Supplement* published some details of my discovery. Fifteen years later, I found, to my surprise, that the discovery was credited to Professor Lowes, in view of his book, *The Road to Xanadu*. To refute this idea, I suggest I must establish two points, (1) Priority. (2) That his said book uses the said discovery.

As regards point (1), the Professor's book was not published until 1927.

With respect to point (2), I quote below my seven propositions as they appeared in *The Times Literary Supplement*, and show where I think the Professor's book agrees:

(*a*) "the poet, its author, never spoke a truer word than when he asserted he received it (the poem) from the remote world of dreams—his opiated brain working while he slept—"

Page 355, Professor Lowes says, "Finally, there can be no longer any doubt that 'Kubla Khan' was composed under the influence of opium,"—"and now we are ready for the dream."

(*b*) I quoted from *De Quincey*, pages 129 and 135. Professor Lowes draws attention (Note 9, page 597) to pages 130, 139, 140, of the same book, to similar effect.

(*c*) "the poem is really a highly poetic paraphrase of the 'Aloadine' passage in the *Pilgrimes*."

Professor Lowes says, page 360, that "when Coleridge fell asleep, recollections of the *Pilgrimes* had been stirred to life by the reading of the Pilgrimage,"—thus (page 361), the poet was reminded of "one of the most unforgettable passages in the book,"—that the said passage in the *Pilgrimes* is the famous account of the Old Man of the Mountain, Aloadine: that from the beginning of the passage Coleridge obtained material for his background. "But the spell of the Old Man of the Mountain was more potent far than that. And its presence now becomes unmistakable. What gave Coleridge the two vivid figures—the damsel with a dulcimer and the youth with flashing eyes and floating hair. Here, at all events, are the inmates of Aloadine's Paradise." Then follows the Aloadine passage in the *Pilgrimes*, in full, save for a few slight omissions, presumably for brevity.

I submit this proves my point (*c*), and further, that it gives the Professor's explanation ("stirred to life" etc.), of *how* the poem came to be a paraphrase of the Aloadine passage in the *Pilgrimes*.

(*d*) "it is supposed to be told by one has passed through the experience he describes."

As mentioned in (*c*) the Professor says the youth with the flashing eyes and floating hair came from the Aloadine passage in the *Pilgrimes*. In that passage, it states Aloadine "questioned (them) where they had been, which answered, by your Grace, in Paradise, and recounted before all all before mentioned." Page 363, the Professor speaks of the "dupe's desire on waking out of sleep to live again the lost delights," on page 378, of "one of Aloadine's fanatic devotees," and page 409, of "the dreamer who is now suddenly present in the dream."

(*e*) "the object of the poem is not merely to describe the palace and grounds, but the writer's (Coleridge's) experiences therein"—

in the character he "had adopted temporarily" for his own.

I think I have shown above—(*c*) and (*d*)—that Professor Lowes agrees with this. Also, page 363, he calls the portion of the poem relating the dupe's experiences "those amazing eighteen lines," and, page 361, he terms those lines "the wonderful last paragraph of 'Kubla Khan,'" thus showing they are the most important part of the poem.

(*f*) "Could I revive within me" sounds like an endeavour to persuade his auditors to supply him with the drug.

Page 363, the Professor speaks of the dupe's "desire on waking out of sleep to live again the lost delights."

(*g*) "the concluding lines—are the key to the poem."

See above (*c*), (*d*), (*e*) and (*f*).

Only last year did I discover Note 13 on page 586 of Professor Lowes's book. It is as follows :—

> "Coleridge's use of the passage in the *Pilgrimes* was pointed out by a correspondent, Mr. Herbert Parsons, in the columns of *The London Times Literary Supplement* for March 9th, 1922, page 156—a reference which I owe to my friend and former pupil, Mr. John Bakeless. Lest I be thought remiss in acknowledging indebtedness to Mr. Parsons, it is proper to state that two years earlier, in a lecture delivered at the Brooklyn Institute of Arts and Sciences, April 15th, 1920, I had discussed the relation of the Old Man of the Mountain to 'Kubla Khan,' and that I had previously called attention to it in the classroom. Mr. Parsons's view that Coleridge, in his prefatory note to 'Kubla Khan' completely confused the *Pilgrimage* and the *Pilgrimes,* and that he really meant the second when he named the first, is untenable. The same thing, I fear, must be said of Mr. Parson's interesting interpretation of the poem."

Although I am misnamed in the above Note, there is no doubt it refers to myself. The two curt denunciations of my ideas with which the Note concludes, having received great publicity, make it necessary I should write in my own defence.

I take his note to be, not an acknowledgment of indebtedness to me, but a statement of his reasons for withholding such an acknowledgment.

Notwithstanding that he proclaims my ideas are "untenable," I submit to have shown above, that five years later, he followed them into print.

This, Sir, is, in brief, my defence to Professor Lowes' attack upon my views, and a statement of my claim to the discovery of the Aloadine passage in the *Pilgrimes* as the source of "Kubla Khan."

Hove. June 22nd. HOWARD PARSONS.

WHITHER POETRY?

The ramifications of modern poetic activity, with its deep cleavages and its counter-currents, derive from a determination on the part of versifiers since the beginning of the present century, to cut adrift from traditionalism, and to escape from a surfeit of romanticism. This tendency probably reached its peak during the period *entre deux guerres.*

Among the first manifestations of reaction we had the impressionist "school," exploring the chartless and miasmic wilderness of symbolism, under the aegis of their arch-priest Mallarme. Only sheerly intuitive reactions were permitted, logic and ratiocination strictly debarred. With the result that, not unlike James Joyce in his *Finnigan's Wake,* the proselytes spoke a private language which none but themselves could interpret, relieved by sporadic glimpses of beauty and intermittent flashes of coherence, as the only rewards for the patient reader outside their own magic circle.

A recent growth out of the parent root of impressionism is the exotic plant known as surrealism, still struggling valiantly for its place in the sun of popular approval through the aggressive activities of, among others, Henry Treece, and his self-styled White Horsemen.

The cerebralists, on the other hand, felt themselves so surfeited by the lulling word-manipulation and sickly opiates of poets such as Swinburne (nowadays we should with our American-inspired mania for labels, term it escapism), that they swung off in a frenzy of reaction toward philosophical analysis and introspection, at the expense of colour and rhythm.

Of these two widely divergent, indeed diametrically opposed movements, the "thinkers," to judge by recent trends in the poetry and critical writings of Eliot and Spender, seem to hold out more hope for the future of poetry than do the intuitives. By allowing a more lyrical quality to leaven their verse, while still retaining its essential thought-substance, the former are more likely to produce important work in the future than are the Horsemen, whose thought is confused, unassimilated and not infrequently naif.

Keats has told us that "poetry should come as naturally as leaves to a tree" : when a poet feels inspired to write, the words should flow easily and spontaneously from his pen. Which is not to say that he should never revise and prune, adjust and modify the first rough draft of his vision. He need, however, not wrestle with each and every philosophical and ethical implication of his theme, any more than he should evade the responsibility of co-ordinating his ideas and introducing lucidity and conciseness into his finished work.

With this in mind, a number of independent poets have gone their way undeterred by trends and fashions, movements and cliques, impelled only by a desire to crystallize in words what they feel or have experienced. The verse such writers produce is not merely imitative (though, alas, we have always our poetasters with us), but retains the stamp of personality, whether its author is dealing with contemporary or "timeless" themes ; and it looks now as if the extremists are coming back into line with him.

Under the inescapable influence of the most formidable and widespread war in history the paths of the poets are already converging. Total war has caused the self-styled realist to come to grips with life, and to recognise that his realism was in fact an escape from reality, a pose. Its repercussions will, in all probability, inject more humanism into the philosopher-poets and bring to the intuitives a realisation that to be of value their work must carry a coherent message for the people. A message which the average man and woman can understand and benefit by, and the inherent lyricism and beauty in which will subconsciously appeal to the artist latent in each one of them.

Under such unifying influence the glorious tradition of English poetry will be carried on, like the waters of a great river which, lately sluggish and in danger of silting up, receives from its mountain tributaries a new abundancy.

F/O., R.A.F., Liverpool. E. Curt Peters.

ESSENTIALS OF POETRY

Marguerite Edgelow and E. M. Harrison have made interesting observations in your April and June issues respectively, on the essential constituents of poetry. Between them they have covered nearly the whole of what is a very wide field. It did strike me, however, that neither had directly mentioned one very vital quality. This is the element of elusiveness, which surely characterises every really living poem.

By "elusiveness," I do not mean obscurantism. It is a difficult thing to define

exactly; if it could be easily explained, it would, *ipso facto,* cease to be "elusive." Some would call it "restraint"; a word frequently used in favourably criticising a poem. Others would prefer "subtlety," while many would unreservedly term it "genius."

All these come near to defining the quality in question, but personally, I think the best description is found in Wordsworth's line: "The light that never was on sea or land . . . . ."

This vivid imagery conveys a picture of something which can be seen with the naked eye, yet has at the same time an unearthly glamour about it; a spiritual aura as it were, which cannot be captured. In poetry, it is a quality which our inward sense perceives, but cannot name. We do not, however, feel baffled or impotent, but have rather a sense of satisfaction, knowing that this is as it should be.

Its equivalents in the sphere of nature are many—the fast-changing, flickering light of sunrise and sunset on the hills and sea; the song of a bird; the darting of a kingfisher down-stream; the slight movement of flowers and trees in the wind. Most of all it is in the very heart and essence of love, which is itself essentially elusive.

> " . . . . . A sense, a sight, a dream revealed.
> It wakens, whence I cannot say;
> Too soon—alas—'tis snatched away,
> Too soon the spirit's eyes are sealed."

But the true poet cannot long be sad about it. He knows that many things must always be beyond his spiritual reach. If this were not so, he would have nothing to strive after; no remote mountain peaks to climb; no moon to cry for; It is the will-o'-the-wisp which he must always follow but never capture.

Brecon, S. Wales, July, 1942. AILSA LOVELL.

ON THE GENESIS OF POETRY

"Genius in the main produces entirely pure poetry." As I see it, genius is concentrated energy springing and growing from the crystal-clear-conscious spring of elementary observations and elemental words. Ordinary man is absorbing these all his day through, *un*consciously. He is a vast sea of unconsciousness, with but a fragment of consciousness. For a thousand impressions he takes in unconsciously there is perhaps one that enters his conscious mind. Sometimes it happens that a larger part of his unconscious leaps into his conscious, and he feels inspired. He may then create something worth while. And his creation will be the greater the further he can trace his thought back to its origin, then the "true vine" or his very life will flow into it. Genius wills almost everything to enter its conscious mind. A genius lets all instruct him: he learns from the smallest incidents, sights, sounds, etc., and *co-relates them all.* When later, they call up some profound truth within him he is able to trace them back to their source, because in the beginning they were impressed upon him *consciously.* Thus, he feels himself an harmonious link in the whole of life. Do I, personally, feel my creative force flagging (i.e., feel low-spirited, or negative)? I find I can cure this by taking single words and letting each in turn work powerfully through me: Light, Love, Truth, Pattern, Seed, Bloom, Will, Word, Blood, and so on.

Here is an example of what I mean: e.g., Light:—*I am* the Light of the world. I am condensed Light. There is Wisdom in the Light. Let your Light so shine upon them. A happy collection of atoms met and were transformed into Light. My thoughts meet and are transformed into Light. Because there is Light my eyes are. I must work towards greater Light upon the things I see (each Light can become more powerful as you continue). Blood:—Blood is a special fluid. The tainted Blood of my fore-

fathers flows through me. My Ego is in my Blood. It taints my Blood. My Ego works through my Blood. That which I am taints my Blood. That which I am may purify my Blood. My heart (the earth force in my body) is all Blood (eventually, one may arrive at a powerful conception of Blood). Love :—Love is the law of the universe. It is the coming back that Love is. I was created from Love. I swung away from Love to develope an Ego. When I come back to my true self, I come back to Love. Love is given to me, and I give it back more glorious. I give my Love. and it comes back to me more glorious. Love is the most powerful force in the world. *Pure* Love towards a thing achieves that thing. Word :—Creative power *is* the Word. The Word was with child (God). The Word was (became) God. The Word became an "I." The Word is my God. Ego and Word are one. Animals have no Ego, they have no Word. I create *myself* through the Word. All that I am is the Word. As an infant I had no Word. With the birth of my Ego (self-consciousness) came the Word. I was released into the Word. Man's power and freedom is in the Word. Freedom is in the discovery of the Word. The Word is my power to *give*. Word, Thought, Thing : in that order comes everything.

Walton-on-Thames. VERE ARNOT.

A LETTER FROM MALTA.

PROF. J. AQUILINA, B.A., LL.D., PH.D. (LOND.), of the Royal University, Valletta, Malta, a contributor to THE POETRY REVIEW, and *Poetry of To-day*, writing on 12th June, 1942 :—

I am very grateful to you and the Editor of *Poetry of To-day*, for the encouraging appreciation of my poem "The Canto of Snakes," with which I have initiated a series of rhythmic sprung verse that allows me a maximum of technical freedom based on the criterion of rhythm, that makes up, when properly handled, for the music otherwise obtainable by a strict observance of prosodic discipline. *The University Journal* will publish about ten of my new ventures, one of them, "The Nordic Superman," will, I hope, make an interesting study of a Southerner's attitude towards the tough North.

We are carrying on here confident that this world-state of horror cannot last indefinitely. Our faith in an ultimate British success remains as solid as ever, and time is showing that it has been well-founded. There is much we have to thank the Russians for.

This letter would be unforgivably incomplete if I did not express my sincere appreciation of your invaluable work in these distressful times, when all that man, man at his best, holds dear has been threatened with extinction. I have read the issues of THE POETRY REVIEW as they reached me with pleasure and renewed enthusiasm for beauty, that is like a resurrection to one whose eyes have been sorely dazed with the ugliness of destruction !

LIFE AND THE POET

It would be a pity if Nicholas Moore's review of *Life and the Poet* discouraged people from reading Stephen Spender's essay. The book may be uneven, but it contains some of the best things written about poetry in recent years. I hope that readers of THE POETRY REVIEW will buy the book—it is only two shillings—and judge for themselves.

Horley. CLIVE SANSOM.

The work of Antoni Boguslawski, a Polish refugee in this country who has published many volumes of verse and other books since he first appeared as a poet in 1908, is to be represented in an English rendering by L. E. Gielgud announced by Allen and Unwin under the title "Mist Before the Dawn." We had the privilege of publishing two distinctive poems by A. Boguslawski in the January POETRY REVIEW.

THE POETS' FELLOWSHIP

THE PREMIUM EDITOR'S REPORT

The Premium Editor has much pleasure in choosing two authors of some originality and individuality. It is delightful to be able to give half the award to Kay Toovey (Amersham), who has so often been faithful in contributing to us, for her lyric "The Never-Never," and the other to Juanita Peirse (Bath), for "Lament for a Dictator."

Highly Commended

Joanna Bagley, Bishop's Stortford ;
Elizabeth Barrett, Seaford ;
D. R. W. Carr, Ferryhill ;
T. E. Casson, Ulverston ;
N. K. Cruickshank, Stoke Sudbury ;
M. Edgelow, Jordans ;
H. W. Harding, Twickenham ;
Gladys Hunkin, St. Ives ;
P. E. Leaver, Ambleside ;
Redcliffe McKie, Brighton ;
Harry Sefton, Lytham ;
Roberta Shuttleworth, Guildford ;
Arthur Lynnford Smith, Wanstead ;
Charles Woodhouse, Haslemere ;

Commended

Vere Arnot, Walton-on-Thames ;
Dorothy Birch, Bournemouth ;
K. C. Bradshaw, Leek ;
Christine Bugge, Sittingbourne ;
Lettie Cole, Bradshaw ;
Alice E. Collinge, Harwood ;
Ellode Collins, Bournemouth ;
A. H. Cordwell, Worthing ;
Eileen Radcliffe Dix, Lincoln ;
Pauline Emeric, Taplow ;
Constance Farmer, Farnham ;
Evelyn M. Finn, Honiton ;
J. W. G. Heaven, Ealing ;
Christine L. Henderson, Montreal ;
Norman A. Herbert, Swindon ;
May H. Hill, Pangbourne ;
Elizabeth Kentish, Westerham ;
Irene H. Lewis, Leatherhead ;
Evelyn Lloyd, Cheltenham ;
E. M. Martin, Bromley ;
C. Morton, Beaufort, Mon.
Eleanor MacNeil, Cobham, Surrey ;
Ierne Ormsby, Thurgoland ;
E. Curt Peters, Liverpool ;
T. Pittaway, Frome ;
Frances Pritchard, Bournemouth ;
Derck B. Reade, West Africa ;
Mary Savidge, York ;
W. T. Shorthole, Preston ;
V. S. Staff, London, N. ;
F. Lucas Thompson, Kingston ;
Janet Urquhart, Hampstead ;
Edith M. Walker, Bournemouth ;
Phyllis Dulce Warwick, Newark ;

Dr. Charles Whitby deals faithfully with Huns Over Bath : April 25th to 27th, 1942.

Little homes of humble folk
Known and served by me so long
Perishing in flame and smoke
Or smashed by Hitler's brutal gang.

We lie in the dark in fear
The night wind scours the room,
The circling planes draw near
Bombs roar out rage and doom.

Like hapless doves we lie
In danger's claws held fast,
Eternity is nigh
Each moment seems our last.

Again, again, again,
That unbelievable shock !

The acrid fumes pour in
The strong foundations rock.

They come, they go, they come,
The nightmare hours creep by,
Beating his dreadful drum
Death still patrols the sky.

Around us now are woe
Havoc and anguish rife
Where many a hurtling blow
Has crushed or mangled life.

They dive: their fusillade
Bespatters ruined walls
And heroes prompt with aid
Wherever duty calls.

And last, that naught may lack
Which hatred could inspire,
Along their deadly track
They rain down seeds of fire.

Till when at dawn we gaze
From our bomb-ravaged home
The city seems ablaze
After her nights of doom.

Little homes of humble folk
Loved and served by me so long,
Perishing in flame and smoke
Or smashed by Hitler's guilty throng.

Mrs. Theodora Roscoe writes: "After hearing Christmas Humphreys at The Poetry Society, July 31st, 1942."

I heard a man speak,
And from out his mouth flowed wisdom,
And more than wisdom, for there was faith,
And vision, and the power to heal the soul.
I passed out of the door with a song in my heart,
For he had lifted a burden,
He had lifted the burden "self"
From off my tired mind,
And had shown me afresh
That love is life,
And to give is to have riches.
It seemed as if something of eternity,
Something of the eternal truth had passed into his words,
And then into our souls,
So that all that went out of that door
Had been touched with a flame,
Which opened to them a new vision.
No one was quite the same,
For they had been made whole.

Sergt. H. Compton (F.S. Section), was placed First in the 1942 Birmingham Festival Sonnet Competition, for his "Immortality."

These fields, which now lie smiling in the sun,
Were tamed and schooled to harvest long ago
By men whose nameless lives we cannot know,
Who went in silence when their work was done.

Their furrows, slowly traced, their crops, hard-won,
Have vanished like some ancient winter's snow,
Their hearts, dispersed in dust, have ceased to glow,
Mere random bones declare their race is run.
And yet within the fields there lie in wait
Strange virtues which to them, not us, belong,
And as we plod behind the plough, which bares
The gracious earth they wooed, we know the strong
Compulsion laid by them on all their heirs,
And cannot choose but drive our furrows straight.

A musical setting by Dr. John Ireland is to be published by Messrs. Boosey & Hawkes. Sergt. Compton is also a contributor to *Poetry of To-day.*

GERARD MANLEY HOPKINS

At The Poetry Society's weekly meeting, on August 14th, Arthur Vivian Burbury, M.C., gave a lecture on "Gerard Manley Hopkins, S.J." and read some of his poems. Lancelot de Giberne Sieveking, D.S.C., as chairman, said:

To embark upon a disquisition about the technique of poetry; to expound the intricacies of that art, and the experiments of Hopkins, is not my intention. All I will do is to add a few sentences like signposts, rather in the manner of the impressionistic notices placed upon very small stages from time to time, such as "This is a forest," "This is the castle," "Distant view of the sea."

Gerard Manley Hopkins was, so to speak, a turning-point, a great literary event. The turning-point most familiar to all school children is, of course, that of Wordsworth and Coleridge, who, in publishing the *Lyrical Ballads* broke away completely from the classic tradition of their immediate predecessors, bringing about a revolution in the approach to poetry. So surely, Hopkins. When we look at the paintings of El Greco, we cannot believe that he lived centuries ago. He was an isolated forerunner of the modern painting that we know to-day, and Hopkins was more than a century in advance of *his* time. The names we know to-day, such as Dylan Thomas, Spender, Auden, surely represent something very closely allied to, and descending from the ideas of Gerard Manley Hopkins when he was making his experiments in the technique of poetry. He did bring quite original thought to his composition, and his contribution to the art is one of the utmost individuality.

People regret it when poets die young, or comparatively young. "Ah, what would we not have had, could he but have lived a little longer!" But, as Richard Hughes remarked on one occasion, "all poets die young, whether they realise it or not." So, perhaps, it is just as well when a poet of some importance dies physically as well as mentally before he begins to be merely an echo of his earlier self. However, considering that Gerard Manley Hopkins died in 1889, it is, to me, a delightful thought that some of his brothers and sisters are still enjoying their lives. Gerard's brother, Lionel Manley Hopkins, said to me the other day down at Haslemere, as we walked rapidly along a lane: "I think that the Consular Service must sometimes regret having allowed me to retire on a full pension in 1908."

My grandfather, Chief Judge of the old East India Company, took up photography not long after it was invented in 1849, and I was able, the other day, to dig out and lend to the present Gerard Manley Hopkins, who is on the staff of the Oxford University Press, two very interesting photographs of his uncle, the original Gerard, and they are both in the volume called "Further Letters and Correspondence with Coventry Patmore." Gerard was my grandfather's favourite nephew, and you will see by the frontispiece that he must have had some adenoidal trouble (the mouth hanging open in the way it does), but somehow, it doesn't seem to impair the sensitive and beautiful quality of the face. It really is an extraordinarily "refined" face, to use a much mangled word. It is not difficult to see, in one's mind's eye, the graceful, quiet, introspective-looking boy, whom my mother knew as cousin Gerard, and whose visits to her home were such a source of delight to her. She was brought up by tutors and governesses, thoroughly familiar with all that is finest and noblest, not only in English literature, but also in the literature of France and the classics, and she used to read his early verses with keen interest. When at last his poems were published for the first time, it was an extraordinary experience for her, to open the book and, after such an immense interval of silence, to hear his voice again.

Looking back, may one perhaps connect some of those curious boyish idiosyncrasies, that the other children noticed, in the late eighteen-fifties, with the direction his invention was later to take! The particular attention which he used to pay to any bird whose song was of a persistent and repetitive nature (and birds were more plentiful in the Surrey of those days than they are now, more plentiful and more various), can you not see the boy listening, with his eyes half closed, and his head on one side, as the bird repeated and repeated and repeated its little song, with a sudden interruption and an odd break in its rhythm? Then, also, may one draw, do you think, any interesting inference from a boy, seen more than eighty years ago, at the other end of the long Georgian garden of our old home at Epsom (in the days when Epsom was a little country town), arranging stones and twigs in rows and patterns, with infinite care? Watching him and talking to him in that garden, it would not have taken a great deal of insight into human character, to tell that, whatever this boy did, there would be totally absent from his work, any of those qualities which he himself, or any of his friends, would regret. Then as later, there was a terrific startling effect of virtue in his mind, and all his thoughts, and this must surely be considered almost as interesting, though of course not quite so rare, as his original contributions to the technique of poetry.

The sense of humour which delights readers of his later correspondence, sparkled through the pages of his boyhood letters to his little sister Katie; and a quarter of a century later this same Katie was writing letters to me, her cousin and godson, ten pages long and all in the wittiest of rhyming septaines. As I re-read one or two of them the other day I thought I could catch an echo of her well-loved brother—the wit, the affection, the twinkle and the smile.

In the summer of 1937, I arranged a dinner, so that the present Gerard Manley Hopkins might meet an old friend of mine, Professor C. K. Ogden, who is the founder of the Orthological Institute, and the inventor of Basic English. During the dinner, Ogden so much impressed my cousin with his intimate knowledge of his uncle, the poet, and his original theories about Hopkins' technique, that he consented to lend him all the available original manuscripts. Subsequently, it came to light that Bridges had suppressed a great many of the accents and stress marks in the published version. The only explanation seemed to be that Bridges had not really understood his Hopkins. Some people, I believe, hold that this is amply demonstrated by reading Bridges'

Testament of Beauty. It was quite an experience to hear Professor Ogden declaiming a Hopkins poem up his resounding stone staircase in Bloomsbury. He has a theory that all poetry ought to be spoken in a thoroughly resonant, echoing acoustic, and not in a dead acoustic; since in a dead and non-resonant room, all the vocal-sustaining-pedal effects of the good-speaker-who-knows-what-he-is-doing-with-stresses are lost. Ogden has at his finger tips long poems of Hopkins, which, at a moment's notice, he can compare with poems by other writers in Latin, German, Greek, Italian; and in this particular case, what he wanted to demonstrate was, not only that Hopkins was not a sport of nature: i.e. an eccentric, unconnected with any tradition; but like the greatest of the modern painters, someone definitely arising *out of*, and connected *with*, the general development of his art throughout the ages. Not only did Ogden want to demonstrate this by the comparisons he was making, but in declaiming them up this resounding stone staircase, he was showing how the ancient Greeks used always to speak their poetry, in the resounding acoustic which their wonderful scientific achievement had enabled them to construct in their auditoriums. As you know, you can stand to-day, in the ruins of a Greek theatre, on the spot where a poet spoke his verses, and without using as much voice as I do now, he—and you—would be heard at the most distant point of the audience.

AMENDMENTS

Two mistakes have been made in the review of my "Songs of *the* Heart": 1. The title is as above—not "Songs of *My* Heart"; 2. The author is not Commander Locker Lampson, but—

Yours faithfully, GODFREY LOCKER LAMPSON, *Crawley, Aug. 27th.*

In the July-August number of THE POETRY REVIEW it is stated at the end of Dr. Marie Stopes' poem, "Instead of Tears," that Lieutenant Rose's poems and writings were lost with him. I am glad to say that this is not the case as I have got the greater part of them in my possession. I should be grateful if you would publish this correction.

E. M. E. ROSE, *Burford Priory, Oxfordshire, August 25th, 1942.*

As both Librarian and English Master here I am interested in modern poetry, quite apart from my own slender musings. I have grown to regard THE POETRY REVIEW as an index not merely of The Poetry Society, but of the poetry world of England. It is invaluable to one who is so far away and whose time for discursive reading is so limited. I have found numerous suggestions in your pages for themes in my teaching—for instance, the conception of a Christian Renaissance in English Literature, a thought I had often glimpsed at myself, became a full-fledged lecture to the Sixth Form Divinity Class last term. Of the poetry you print I have on the whole nothing but praise, it combines decorum with energy and is traditional without ceasing to be modern. May I wish you every success in your crusade during these tumultuous days? We, down under, often look at our clear skies and think of you.

Melbourne Church of England Grammar School, South Yarra. DONOVAN CLARKE.

Miss ETHEL K. LAWRENSON, Otago Women's Club, Dunedin, New Zealand, renewing her membership subscription, writes: "I can only repeat how delighted I am when the overseas mail arrives with my copy of THE POETRY REVIEW safe. To me membership of your wonderful Society seems to be not only a link with all that is new and best in literature, but also a link with the many people in the Motherland, who are helping to win the war by keeping culture alive, and constantly before the people all over the world."

Miss E. M. Almedingen's brilliant historical pageant of Poland (*Polonias Testamentum,* John Lane, 10s. 6d.) has all the exciting stir and clash and colour of surface movement, underlaid with a deeply sensitive apprehension of the final aim and purpose of all history—man's ultimate resolution of the problem of living. The poem sets out the story of Poland in a vivid series of sketches and scenes, subtly contrasted; the author has given herself something very difficult to achieve and to a remarkable degree she has succeeded. There is a great feeling for words; Miss Almedingen uses a flexible free verse form with a natural instinct for rhythm. The poem might perhaps have gained in unity with a little more metrical discipline, but equally it might have lost something of its present freshness and spontaneity.

We see the beginnings of Poland,

> That young and wild people, as yet unaware of their thirst
> For a roof-tree and a home-fire and all quiet settled ways.

continuing to "Tannenberg," much of which is as tragically true to-day as it was in 1397.

> The armoured mind of the Teuton considered the land with the smile
> Of a hungry leopard biding his blood-red hour. . . .
> The whispered counsels flew abroad.
> "A corner of Poland might be yours." . . . .
> The insolent murmurs, pale blue flowers seeded in hell,
> Stole from the castle . . . .
> Yet the seedling never came to its flowering hour.

There is a fine portrait of Stefan Batory, that "brooding alien name"; a "man called to empire," greater than his age. It shows most movingly how

> . . . the nobles wounded his vision
> and stained the snow of his dream . . .
> Their cups could not hold his wine.

This sympathetic presentation of Poland leaves one with a conviction of the movement and purpose behind all history; it also has a positive contribution to make towards the future.

An interesting introduction to Czech authors is Paul Selver's *An Outline of Czech Literature,* which gives a very clear account of the various movements and shows how closely history and creative art are connected. The Thirty Years War decimated the aristocracy, amongst whom were most of the great artists, and left only the peasants. The Catholic Hapsburgs destroyed a great part of the work that already existed, as being heretical, and so practically the whole Czech literature had to be rebuilt. Its greatest contributions to European literature as a whole are poetry and the historical novel. The former was first to re-develop and has been a great source of inspiration to the Czech people, as the poets have tried to stimulate Nationalist tendencies and bring back a full National consciousness. One of the most remarkable poets, and one who has exerted the greatest influence, Vrchlicky, was registrar of a technical college in Prague and in his spare time produced about 70 volumes of inspired verse, in addition to translating a number of the most prominent writers in twelve different languages.

Our poet Byron had a much greater following abroad than over here; Macha amongst other Czechs was inspired by him; Zeyer, a remarkable Baroque poet, was akin to the English decadents. Folk music and song play a much more prominent part in Continental life than in England, and so the people are acquainted with national poets by hearing their lyrics sung in cafés and beer gardens, sometimes with an orchestra, sometimes quite spontaneously by someone present. Or a poet might

get up and give a rendering of his own or another's work in a way never done here. In this way, European poetry has always tended to be very much an integral part of life, not a separate compartment only unlocked on Friday afternoons at Portman Square!

Gerard Shelley has made an interesting collection of his translations from Russian poets (*Modern Poems from Russia,* Allen and Unwin, 6s.). Two of the most original are the peasant writers Sergei Yesienin and Nikolai Kluyev. Of the former, Mr. Shelley says "He was famous as the leader of the 'Imagist' movement, and vigorously opposed the industrialisation of his beloved 'wooden' Russia." Also included are a group of Russian Symbolist poets, including Balmont and Andrei Biely, and the rival group of Acmeists, who aimed at simplicity and virility; "Anna Akhmatova, together with her first husband Nikolai Gumilev was one of the leaders." Some of the national flavour—if one might be allowed to call it that—of the poems has been lost, as is so often the case with verse translations: nevertheless, the snow and the stars and the woodsmoke still remain.

Well-known poets help neither themselves nor their protegées when they allot such extravagant praise as Hugh McDiarmid gives to David Martin's *Battlefields and Girls* (MacClellan, 9d.). "These . . poems . . are utterly different from, and infinitely better than, the once overlauded poems of English war poets in the last great war." Needless to say, they are nothing of the sort; but they are straightforward and simple with an unmistakable note of sincerity.

It is interesting to note that so much of the work now being published is directed towards the future; an attempt to find "the true end and purpose of man."

My Love to Thee, by Jean Fuller (Unwin Bros., 5s. 6d.) represents a contemporary development in verse, and is interesting as such. It is really a concentrated novel in verse, written in the form of short pieces, elaborately dated and placed, telling the story of lovers who come together and finally part because of their ultimate incompatibility. The final test of such an account of intimate personal relationship must be the quality of the participants; by it they either stand or fall. Mrs. Fuller's characters are neither Heloise nor Abelard. There is a good command of language, but also some need of metrical discipline: many of the poems are shapeless, where a little more attention to form would have produced a genuine lyric. Variety is necessary in this type of work in order to avoid a monotonous effect, although Mrs. Fuller often has a lively and original turn of phrase.

Marjorie Tilden's *Songs and Sonnets* (Combridges, Hove) show some depth of feeling and sensitiveness to atmosphere. They are a little restricted in range, and they suffer from too great restraint of form—not a fault usual in contemporary verse. But from their very sincerity and range they afford solace to the reader and doubtless to the writer.

They fell in a steel-slim spate on the editorial desk; crisp paper covers invited the touch, the practical modern format filled the eye—and the contents were mostly bread-and-margarine. Paper control and subsequent increased wariness on the part of publishers has produced a new Renaissance; we are returning to the age of the verse pamphlet. "Quality" is the cry, an excellent one, always providing the quality does not exist in the author's opinion only. Poetry should be digestible, but not because there is nothing to digest. The pamphlets of Nick Greene's day, and later of Pope's, were personal, challenging, audacious: they scintillated in satire, though many were highly scurrilous as well. But too many of the verse booklets published to-day are

mere fumblings. Search is instinct in poetry, the feeling after truth; fumbling never.

In contrast to most is Dallas Kenmare's *Crystal Mountain* (E. J. Burrow, 2s.). Miss Kenmare seeks; she does not fumble. The poem "Maya" gives a keynote, though the line here is shorter than that most often in use, three-quarters of the poems employing a very long line, often with an effective internal lilt.

> The desire for contact, even for communion,
> that, too, is illusion—
> the delicate secret of life is not there . . .
> it shimmers in the wind-silvered willows, in the
> lift and sway of branches rippling in the
> summer sun,
> hides in the cloud-palaces piling up beyond the
> blue hills . . .
>
> There is no answer to the relentless questioning,
> not now . .
> rest content, then, with the flying intimations
> glistening among the willow-leaves,
> gleaming among the light-laden clouds.

One of the best is "In Memoriam—Virginia Woolf"; this was first published in THE POETRY REVIEW.

Mr. A. H. Body should beware of describing his *Island Legacy* (Univ. of London Press, 2s.) as

> Writ with a purblind eye
> To guide my sullen quill.

He might be taken too literally, which he hardly deserves when we find

> Then, from some freezing pond,
> A flight of swans
> Rime-silver on a leaden sky,
> long necks outstretched . . .
> The upper air surges to life
> As strong and purposeful they pass
> In silent line across the bitter road.

The future of England is the theme of Alan C. Tarbat's poem, *England* (Arrowsmith, 6d.), which shows a revolt from the intellectualism of an Auden, but in doing so is in danger of sowing the dangerous thistles of poetic cliches.

When a book is described as Poems of Uganda (*This Springing Wilderness*, Pub. in aid of Uganda War Fund, Uganda Bookshop, Sh. 3.50) one expects to see Africa, the hot, damp fecundity, the savage, swift alternation of life and death. The cool simple lyrics of Stella Wood are unexpected: apart from cranes and weaver-birds appearing instead of thrushes, there is little African flavour. Geoffrey Masefield has a more accurate portrayal of atmosphere.

There are others, yet none of these booklets has the violent Apocalyptic style, and for this one is thankful. But, with the exception first made, they have little distinction either. In David Ockman's *Time Medicine and Deity* (Heinemann), format is ahead of contents; *The Swallow Lovers* (G. Sims) has some vivid phraseology, and *Poems from Ulster* (selected and introduced by Robert Greacen: W. Erskine Mayne, Belfast, 1s.) sheds no special lustre on Ulster, though one or two of the poems have some distinction, notably "Prothalamion" by Harold Brooks, and Alex Comfort's "Elegy on a Hill."